1 Magazine Kurt Herbert Adler

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By Stephen E. Rubin

Puncture the technicolored bubble that encases and often enshrines the world of opera, and what remains is a zoo peopled by an odd lot of hybrids—some brilliant, some talented, some zany, some viscious, some helpless, some hopeless, and some who, undoubtedly, would be safer under lock and key. But perhaps the rarest bird of them all is the zookeeper, that eccentric visionary who dares to tempt the fates and play a constant game of Russian roulette managing a sideshow called an opera company. Only if the zookeeper is in complete control do the denizens respect him, acknowledging because of his dazzling professional facility, the simple fact that you can't be a nice guy and keep this kind of crazy crew in tow.

In the United States today, there is only one general manager of a major opera house who holds this distinction. He is Kurt Herbert Adler, the sometimes big-mouthed, always big boss of the San Francisco Opera.

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In his 18 years as head of the house, Adler has enlarged and molded the San Francisco opera into a great company while at the same time offending enough big and little wigs to offer himself as a candidate for opera's Public Enemy Number One. Curiously, however, even the most rabid anti-Adlerians will jump to the general director's defense, hailing him as one of the most effective and influential men in the business. A powerful New York manager sums up the typical Jekyll and Hyde feeling about Adler. "He's the biggest S.O.B. I know. It's his manner—which is opinionated, overbearing and insulting—that is so offensive. But despite his obnoxious ways, my hat's off to him. He runs one hell of a fine operation, and what is probably the most successful big opera company in the States." The controversial intendant retorts, "I think I am here to do a job—not to be loved."

In the past, the San Francisco Opera has placed among the Big Three in the land, the other two being the Met and Chicago. Of late, however, there is a growing belief that San Francisco has risen to the top of the trinity, replacing at least in artistic standards and the scope of its operation, the mother of them all, the Metropolitan.

In fact, such is the respect Adler has come to command that whenever the Met's current ills are brought to the fore, it is generally agreed that he is probably the only man in the country today who would be able to return the world-renowned company to its once-supreme status. The reasons cited for this show of confidence can be broken down into three Adler strongpoints:

He is a proven administrator of superb ability; he is artistically,

theatrically and musically knowledgeable, being a conductor himself and having worked his way up through a number of European and American performing organizations; and he is a financial wizard, being able to balance a budget by employing tight, shrewd and tough business tactics.

But San Franciscans needn't fear that their man is going to leave them in the lurch and come East to mine what's left of the Met's gold. Adler insists he is staying put, that he has future plans for his own company, so why should he seek to rule elsewhere?

The general director is cautious and tight-lipped in talking about the Metropolitan, especially to a reporter. But perhaps with his good friend, soprano Birgit Nilsson, he is more candid discussing the situation. Miss Nilsson reports that, after asking him once why he didn't take over the trouble-ridden company, Adler replied, "If I knew that it wasn't too late, I would do it." The soprano interprets this remark as not referring to his own advancing years (Adler is 69), "but I guess he thinks the Met is too involved with problems now, and he couldn't save it." Miss Nilsson adds, however, "If there's anybody who could save it, it would be him, I'm sure."

Adler, the man, is not physically impressive. He is short, has longish white hair, soft blue eyes and an extensive paunch. He has been described as looking like a bespectacled frog. He dresses rather nattily, sporting bold striped shirts, nifty bow ties and colorful silk handkerchiefs jutting out of his jacket breast pocket.

His accent is pronouncedly Viennese, and although he has (more)

been a citizen of this country since 1941, Adler has retained the lubricating charm for which his fatherland is famous. But it is an on-again, off-again winsomeness. He is also the intimidating Prussian, revealing a nastily dictatorial and arrogant side to his personality.

What he has mastered better than most is an electrifying ability to capitalize on these Two Faces of Kurt, and get what he wants by being a martinet on the one hand and absolutely irresistible on the other. "I think I am probably ambitious;"

Adler announces with startling understatement. "I am not ruthless, but if I want something I will usually put it over." This is a statement of fact, not a careless display of bravado.

Personally, he has managed to find three wives and father two children. The current Mrs. Adler is the former Nancy Goodhue Miller of a socially prominent family, who is 37 years her husband's junior and who looks like a knockout clenchedjaw Vassarette, but isn't.

Professionally, Adler's remarkable record of accomplishments speaks far more tellingly for him than he speaks for himself. Adler insists that he doesn't think much about himself or enjoy self-analysis. His wife adds, "he is not the slap-'emon-the-back, socializing kind of guy. Nor is he a gossipy or small-talk fellow. He doesn't really ever sit back, put up his feet, and chatter." Perhaps this explains why he has been giving the same interview over the years. It is not that he won't talk; he'll talk plenty, but no matter what one asks him, he somehow manipulates the conversation and one experiences deja vu as Adler reels through the same stale anecdotes one has read in print in the past.

The general director is not necessarily secretive or lacking in depth. He is, rather, a man who operates almost exclusively on instinct. One would guess that, even alone with the lovely Nancy, he would be hard-pressed, if pushed, to intellectualize on the subject of running an opera company. As if answering for him, an Adler foe recently remarked snidely, "His artistic philosophy appears to be to bring over good artists from Europe before any other American company, and to stay within his budget."

Someone once said that "Adler has cunning hunches." This is undeniable. It has also been said, and rightly, that he eschews the status quo. He himself admits to being a gambler, and to enjoying every minute of it. If given a choice between two singers, one adequate and predictable, and the other a calculated risk who might bomb or triumph, Adler will almost always choose the latter. While he takes good advantage of a storehouse of experience, not to mention rock-solid musical knowledge, he still relies on his hunches. "It's true," Adler agrees, "when I haven't acted according to my instincts, I've been wrong."

apparent that Adler does not see himself merely as an impresario whose job is to present grand opera grandly. He does this surely, but he is also deeply concerned with the development of the art form, its performers, particularly the American ones, and, perhaps most important, its audience. Adler caters to both the established audience and, in his mind, the endless potential one. This, as well as his single-minded devotion to

the general operatic cause, can be seen most clearly in the complex West Coast empire he has built.

To many people, the San Francisco Opera, founded in 1923, is nothing but a fall season of star-packed performances of wonderfully varied repertory presented in luxurious and imaginative trappings. This is indeed part of its story, but only part. The past season, which ran from September 13 through December 1, surely boosted the glamorous image. It was an opera freak's paradise with Joan Sutherland in the first American performances of Massenet's "Esclarmonde" in 81 years, Leontyne Price in her first "Manon Lescaut" anywhere, Beverly Sills as "The Daughter of the Regiment," Birgit Nilsson as Isolde, Luciano Pavarotti in his first "Luisa Miller," and a weighty assortment of other popular singers, performing familiar and unfamiliar repertory.

The fall season, or the international season as it is known, is the heart of the San Francisco Opera--Adler's calling card, his precious jewel. But it is just a beginning, a parent so to speak, which has spawned an unheard of number of offspring, all of which together make up an annual operation of a breadth unknown elsewhere.

In the spring, Adler presents his mini company, simply dubbed Spring Opera Theater. Established in 1961, this company is devoted to a more intimate approach of presenting opera, of late only in English, with young American professionals, and at popular prices. A typical sampling of the diverse repertory could be found last season when Donizetti's "Don Pasquale," Cavalli's "L'Ormindo," Floyd's "Of Mice and Men,"

and Offenbach's "The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein" were on the bill. The company performs in the 1,700-seat Curran Theater in downtown San Francisco for about a month annually.

Six years after founding Spring Opera, Adler formed
Western Opera Theater, a traveling company presenting opera in
English for five months to communities throughout California,
Arizona, Nevada, Oregon and Alaska. With its specially designed
portable stage and lighting equipment, WOT has hit the road for
more, than 50,000 miles. Aside from cultivating new audiences,
many of whom have never seen live opera before, the company
gives young American performers a chance to learn their craft
under exciting and challenging conditions.

The traveling ensemble also offers all sorts of educational programs, and is the sponsor of the popular annual season of "Dollar Opera" at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, as well as the equally acclaimed "Street Opera," which blasts out music up and down the hilly thoroughfares of the beautiful bay city.

The San Francisco Opera Auditions, which annually presents four awards from \$2,000 to \$250, began in 1954, before Adler's ascendancy to the throne of the company. Three years later, and one year after Adler became general director, the Merola Opera Program was launched in memory of Gaetano Merola, Adler's only predecessor, who founded the company. A 10-week study and performance course, this program, supervised by the boss, is for 15 to 20 audition finalists.

The basic operation can be broken down, then, into four major components: San Francisco Opera, Spring, Western and (more)

Auditions/Merola. But last year, the indefatigable Adler came up with yet another "baby," and a gimmicky but valid one at that. Called Brown Bag Opera, it is a lunchtime series of one-act operas or selections from opera, and audiences are either encouraged to bring or purchase lunch to eat during the show. Admission is 50 cents. Since BBO was an incredible success, Adler, never one to sit by and let a good idea go to waste, now hopes to produce a spinoff called HHO, or Happy Hour Opera. His only problem so far is in locating a suitable cocktail lounge in which to perform.

The contagious case of opera-itis rampant throughout the bay area is, no doubt, a direct result of Adler's Herculean striving to interest the masses in the form. But, as the general director is the first to admit, he has been aided mightily by the wonderland that is San Francisco. People joke that it's always Halloween there; what better atmosphere for the most magical of the performing arts. Physically, it is a beautiful city and a lovely place to visit. Both native and foreign-born artists adore going there to work for longish stretches. Even the climate is conducive to a year-round operation.

"It's a city where the mentality and temperament of the people are probably geared a little more towards the arts in general," Adler explains, citing the enormous civic pride in his company and Mayor Joseph Alioto's on-the-record remark that "the best we have in San Francisco is the opera." The mayor's sincere advertisement—he himself is a buff—reflects the norm; cab drivers will talk about the opera with passengers,

and Adler delightedly tells of the time when three policemen were spotted standing during a performance of "Madama Butterfly." When asked if anything was wrong, they answered no, that they were there to direct traffic following the opera, and had come early to catch the show.

The city's moral support is obvious but intangible. Attendance records, however, prove it in black and white. For the past three years, the fall season reached the enviable figure of between 101 and 102 per cent capacity. And Adler receives financial aid from both the city itself and its private citizens.

"When I was asked several years ago if I would like it if six very wealthy men picked up the entire deficit, I said I would hope not," Adler reports. "You know, if we lost one of these rich men, already he would be hard to replace. And I was also worried that if people would give so much money, they would also want to have a say and interfere in artistic and administrative matters.

"That was the beginning of our efforts to broaden the support, which was quite successful. We now have a large number of contributors, but still not enough large contributors. This is partly due to the fact that San Francisco itself has no industry. We depend on banks and insurance and oil companies. We get money from them, but in comparison to cities like New York and Chicago, the amounts are small. So one has to work harder.

"Broad-based support does something else too. If people give you money, it means they are interested. This has its

consequences in, for example, our attendance records. And there's a very strict control system over money which I have established. The least that people who give us money are entitled to know is that we can really account for what we are doing with it. We are very orderly and have, I believe, the lowest deficit of all the major opera companies."

The 1974 budget for the international season was about \$4½-million. Sixty performances were given, each costing an estimated \$73,000. Box office intake covered between 62 and 65 per cent of the expenses, which meant that the company's deficit, before contributions, was about \$1,400,000.

The SFO receives about \$315,000 a year from the city of San Francisco. They also have a tax system for the patrons who subscribe, in certain locations, primarily on Tuesdays, but on other nights as well, from which they annually raise between \$120,000 and \$150,000. This guarantee system is used toward de creasing the operational deficit; subscribers know in advance what they have to pay and must sign a guarantee slip before receiving their tickets. (Tuesday is the night to go to the opera, as Monday night is at the Met. This is probably one of the few remaining remnants of any strongly "social" aspect of opera-going in the bay city. Opening night of the season is still a white tie affair, but it was interesting to note that at the "gala" premiere of "Esclarmonde" in October, those in black tie were the exception to the rule. This informality of dress is yet another indication of the popularization of Adler's audience.)

Adler, the quintessential penny-pincher, has established a virtual reign of terror concerning money. Interoffice memos

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must be inserted into used envelopes. The wise wear sweaters to dress rehearsals because there's no heat in the house. The postage meter outside Adler's strikingly unplush office bears the warning, "for official business only." Secretaries moan, "are we counting paper clips today?" Even Mrs. Adler reports that her husband "will march downstairs and bark at the stage-hands that they've got to finish something by five o'clock. He's tough, but the fact that he's kept things under control businesswise is the way this company has stayed alive. I'm not trying to point a finger, but look what happened to the Met."

The general director says, "If you don't watch small, unnecessary expenses, they multiply and finally you are in trouble."
It goes without saying that if Adler pays detailed attention to
what he calls small expenses, one can imagine the eagle eye he
focuses on the real pocketbook-depleting areas. Here he is unto
himself. Simply put, he is totally involved in every aspect of
everything, becoming something of a dreaded peripatetic pain in
the neck. In his favorite guise as a jack of all trades, Adler
is not merely a financial overseer, but an artistic and musical
one too.

The general director does not believe in spending outrageous amounts of money on single productions because he feels that they go out of fashion too soon for him to capitalize his costs. He has nothing against the current vogue of "shared" productions as long as it is firmly understood that he is showing the production of another house and not his own. Of course, he realizes the dangers involved here.

"I'm torn now because I said I would take the Met's 'I (more)

Vespri Siciliani' production unseen," Adler explains. "Well it's certainly not what I would have wanted. Yet, I don't want to build our own 'Vespri' because we can't give it too often. But if I can get a very good cast, why shouldn't I show it as a Met production? It's not my responsibility what the Met does. I can justify it by saying, I wouldn't have been able to do 'Vespri' otherwise, and no other production was available. In that case, I think I'm right." (San Francisco productions also travel. "Esclarmonde" is scheduled to come to the Met the season after next.)

Adler also avoids great expenditures on the cover system, in which singers are trained in specific roles to standby in case of illness. Here the gambler in Adler really shines. Though operatic cancellations are much too frequent, the general director takes his chances. He has no real cover system in any sense; what he does is to have his staff comb the schedules of other singers and know, at a moment's notice, who might be available to be flown in as a last-minute replacement. He claims he has been rarely burned; he is lucky.

Once he has decided on a San Francisco production, Adler's involvement is all-encompassing. His reputation as the Buttinsky of all time precedes him. And he is not averse to offering critiques on everything from lighting cues to instrumental execution.

John Pritchard, music director of the Glyndbourne Festival and a regular SFO guest conductor, has learned to put up with Adlerian shenanigans. "He is particularly difficult with comductors, because he's a conductor himself," Pritchard reports.

"I must say that in my first season, I was very conscious of his presence at rehearsals. Indeed, he would often come and peer down unbelievingly over the orchestra rail as though to say to the instrumentalists, 'he can't have asked you to play that!' But I've become used to it by now."

Jean Pierre Ponnelle, the brilliant designer/director and another SFO regular, chuckles over Adler's seeming inability to mind his own business. "For me," Ponnelle says with obvious fondness, "Adler is the last of a generation of old theater dictators. I'm sure for our generation, and I hope for the next, that the theater will be a more democratic enterprise. Kurt actually likes fighting; it's a game for him. We have no difficulties with my fee, but we'll fight over an extra prop, which is ridiculous because it costs \$150. Sure I win, but he enjoys the fight. Sometimes it's boring, though, because it takes too much time."

Matthew Farruggio, the SFO company coordinator, reports that the staff is always wary of Adler because they know he doesn't miss a trick. "They say he picks on things," Farruggio explains. "This, for example, will be the week for him to look at everybody's shoes. If they aren't shined, the wardrobe department hears about it. He'll even spot crooked hems or a safety pin in a costume. He sees everything—it's fantastic."

Thanks to his super-critical eye and an endless amount of energy, Adler, who is often in the house from 9:30 in the morning until midnight, has a turnover of secretaries that is perament. extraordinary, even for a man of his tem/ Mrs. Adler explains why. "He's not difficult as much as terribly demanding, and

there are very few people who can do the job. But his demands come out of a desire for good quality. Being there all the time, a secretary is in the worst, vulnerable position and gets barked at a lot. Finally, if he loses patience, off they go."

The put-upon secretaries are not the only ones who don't take kindly to Adler's acting the know-it-all. Robert Commanday, music critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, has time and again come out against the general director's busybody tendencies. "Most artists tend to be politic and discreet about what is at times unprofessional over-meddling," Commanday says. "The conflict in the whole procedure is that Adler's total concern and sense of responsibility for what happens artistically is generally responsible for the high level of the company's performances. The problem is that you have to take the unfortunate meddling along with judgments and intrusions which are done publicly and not Very subtly. It's a question of style. Being an intendant is an impossible job, and Adler is an 'impossible' man in both the good and negative senses of the word."

Adler asserts, "Right or wrong, I think a theater must have the stamp of one man who is willing to take all the responsibility. The gentleman who considers himself the chief critic in San Francisco accuses me of interfering with everything. But the people who work with me and like to work with me always say I never force them to do things. You cannot force a real artist anyway, but you can discuss and suggest things, and maybe if one does this, in the long run, a company develops a certain physiognomy. I think I do much less than I am being accused of all the time, but I also think an exchange

of opinion, of reaction, is all-important for the artistic standards of a company. I'm sorry, but only someone who really doesn't know what a company is all about will complain about this. And there's another thing. My advantage may be that I went through the mill. I worked my way up, and I'm not ashamed of it."

On the contrary, there is nothing Adler likes more than discussing the tale of his being born into a wealthy family, owner of textile mills, but that he was brought up by a mother who believed that he should not be a spoiled little rich kid, and taught him to make his own way in the world.

A musical house in upper-class Vienna is the norm, and the Adlers were no different. Papa was an amateur composer who could afford to soothe his ego by hiring orchestras to play what his son refers to today as his "lousy" music. Papa also could frequently be found at the piano improvising. All of this activity, of course, influenced the young man of the house who began music lessons at five, and was soon at the piano himself.

Young Kurt did double duty, attending high school and the music academy simultaneously, and then the music academy and the conservatory at the same time, so that he could learn conducting as well as theory. During this period, thanks to well-placed family connections, the teenager was often an occupant of the Royal Box at the Vienna Opera. But despite his knowing the right people, he never allowed himself to be hired by the opera simply because of friends. "I wanted to get going on my own terms and my own merits," he recalls.

In 1925, when he was 20, the young man was well on his way, (more)

serving as a conductor for the famed Max Reinhardt in Vienna. It was only three years later, after leaving Reinhardt, that Adler became professionally involved in opera, working in various Italian and German theaters. But it was at the Volksoper in Vienna, where he was conducting "Faust" that he began to really make a name for himself. It was through this engagement that he was invited to assist Toscanini during the summer of 1936 in Salzburg.

The political situation being what it was, Adler, on the lookout for work in this country, accepted an invitation to be chorus master at the Chicago Opera, and emigrated to the United States in 1938. He remained in Chicago for five years until he was lured to San Francisco by Gaetano Merola, who offered him a position as both chorus director and conductor. By 1949, Adler had proven himself to the point that he was made Merola's assistant. Four years later, Merola suffered a heart attack while conducting, and Adler automatically assumed responsibility of the company, although he did not receive his present title until 1956.

The company he inherited specialized rather grandly in what today is known as "instant opera"—big stars thrown together in front of makeshift settings basically just standing there and singing. Merola believed that it was impossible to sell an opera more than once or twice a season, and so what he served up was something like a five—week season of 17 different works. This furious schedule guaranteed that performances were grossly under—rehearsed. But Merola was a man with terrific flair, he managed to woo the big names out West, and San Francisco was

treated to some great singing, if not much more.

Adler continued in the Merola tradition of signing up stars, but he also began building productions that were not interchangeable and hiring directors who made the singers behave like people instead of cattle. He further adopted what is, in essence, the common European stagione system of presenting performances.

That is, an opera is in the repertory for a limited period with the same cast and is then withdrawn. Adler's reasoning here is, "You can hardly tie down qualified artists for a long period anymore. Very few of them will stay put because it is too easy to get from one place to another, it is more interesting in some ways and also financially more rewarding."

As well as enlarging the fall season (in 1937 there were 23 performances; this year there were 60), Adler altered its profile by including works other than the bread and butter favorites. He can be credited with the American premieres of Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Janacek's "The Makropoulos Case," Poulenc's "Dialogue of the Carmelites," Shostakovich's "Katerina Ismailova," Strauss' "Die Frau Ohne Schatten," Walton's "Troilus and Cressida," von Einem's "Visit of the Old Lady," and the U.S. stage premieres of Cherubini's "Medea,"
Donizetti's "Maria Stuarda," and Orff's "Carmina Burana."

A traveling intendant, Adler has always annually scoured

Europe for talent and has returned home with such treasures

as Birgit Nilsson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Leonie Rysanek, Geraint

Evans, Stuart Burrows, Teresa Zylis-Gara and Pilar Lorengar, all

of whom made their American debuts with him. He has also assisted

strongly in getting a number of American singers well on their

operatic roads. Among the better known ones are Leontyne Price,
Marilyn Horne and Jess Thomas.

Despite his sometimes gruff and all-too-candid manner, Adler can be a pussycat with singers he respects, many of whom adore him. Miss Price, for instance, graces his house with many of her most important debuts, and trusts him implicitly. "Vocally, he's the most knowledgeable impresario I've ever known," the soprano says. "Throughout the years, I've accepted his opinions and they've helped me." Beverly Sills is another Adler enthusiast. "I consider him a friend," she reports.

Marilyn Horne finds what she calls Adler's typically Viennese game-playing a bit too ornate for her tastes, but basically enjoys the general director nonetheless. "The game-playing is his greatest problem though," Miss Horne explains. "For example, instead of calling me or my manager, he will call somebody who has my ear to find out if I'm interested in something. And he definitely waits too long to make decisions. But he covers himself cleverly by keeping two or three people waiting. I've told him to his face, 'You know Kurt, I have a soft spot for you someplace in my heart. I just don't know where."

Adler is often accused of catering effusively to the stars and treating the lesser lights shabbily. In 1956, for instance, when Birgit Nilsson made her U.S. debut, she was not a name and therefore got the Adler cold shoulder. "I remember how I felt at that time, and I thought I was pretty good," Miss Nilsson recalls. "Yet, I was completely ignored. I found him so arrogant and unsympathetic, I decided not to come back. I didn't actually until the Sixties. Then, I didn't understand

the difficulties an opera director has. Now I respect him, and really admire his attitude. You have to be tough; if you try to please everybody, you are finished. But, maybe that's one of his faults, that he worships the big singers and doesn't pay much attention to the small ones."

No matter how well Adler gets on with the superstars, he does not, despite what he may say to the contrary, get away with paying them anything less than the astronomical fees they are accustomed to. "I sing there for quite a bit more than I get at other houses, higher than at the Met surely," Leontyne Price says. But Adler's pampering goes only so far. He proudly announces that he will never contract artists for more performances than they will actually sing and pay them anyway, thereby upping their fees tremendously, which is a common practice in some opera houses.

And, of course, when an artist is not of the box office quality of a Leontyne Price, Adler can be impossible to deal with. "In negotiating a contract or fee, he's not only a penny-pincher, but downright nasty," a manager of singers reports.
"There's no room for discussion, and a take-it or leave-it attitude creeps in."

If Adler is sometimes short-tempered and always short of time, it is because he does have his problems. There is no denying that there are areas in his mammoth domain which need fixing, some desperately. The essential problem, lying at the very heart of the operation and causing damage on a number of levels, is the company's home. For its fall season, the SFO employs the ugly and impersonal 3,252-seat War Memorial Opera

House, built in 1932. The fact that it is esthetically blah only begins to tell of its drawbacks. It is not a modern theater, either in its backstage facilities, lighting system or rehearsal space. The orchestra pit, for example, can only accommodate 78 players, easily 20 short for some of the Wagner and other large-scaled works dear to Adler's heart.

To make matters worse, as ill-equipped as the War

Memorial is, it is only available to the opera between July 1

and December 1, because after that the San Francisco Symphony

moves in. Being homeless half the year causes Adler all sorts

of misery, most of which he copes with cleverly, but that

doesn't make his solutions anything more than essentially

makeshift.

Throughout the summer, Adler runs technical rehearsals of every show in the fall repertory, which means that he must bring in designers and directors months ahead of the time their work will be shown. These rehearsals take place during the day. At night, the chorus goes through its paces. The reason for this is that the SFO chorus is only semi-professional. It cannot be a fully professional group because Adler cannot offer them enough work (if he had the house longer he could). As such, union regulations dictate that the chorus is only available for nighttime rehearsals because during the day, the choristers have to work to earn a living.

In the fall, when a semblance of a normal rehearsing schedule begins, the technical problems are, hopefully, ironed out. Then Adler copes with the musical ones, the principal singers and the orchestra. But, at least during the day, the

principals cannot rehearse with the chorus. And once the season is in full swing, there are often difficulties getting the stage for rehearsals in the morning because Adler refuses to hire an expensive stage crew to strike sets overnight. Of course, if the theater was more properly equipped, the striking of sets would be much easier and therefore less prohibitive.

The whole operation seems something like a monster jigsaw puzzle, and while Adler is deft at putting the pieces together, even he admits that life would be simpler if he had a decent facility and a real chorus. Luckily, for the most part, once the curtain is up it is often difficult to see the seams, but artists on all levels agree that getting there is, by no means, part of the fun.

Martin Bernheimer, the influential and sharp-tongued critic of the Los Angeles Times, believes that either because of these unfortunate circumstances or by his own doing, Adler often misses the boat. "His good instincts are usually compromised by something or other—lack of funds, time, resource and sometimes even conviction," Bernheimer says. "For example, one gets a Ring cycle more frequently in San Francisco than in any other city in America, but with an inadequately staffed orchestra. Or, he employs interesting directors, but rarely gives them the time to realize their conceptions with consistency of impact and style. Somehow, his season always looks better on paper than it ends up being in practice. But he will take chances—importing lesser known artists, experimenting within necessarily conservative bounds in repertory and casting. I have admiration for him, but it's always gualified."

There may be hope—at least to correct some of the circum—stantial imperfections. "We are in a state of transition,"

Adder reports. "The symphony is supposed to get its own hall.

The city has already earmarked money for it. That will free this house for longer seasons and more activities.

"Connected with the symphony hall project are plans to build an addition to the opera house. There will be storage areas for scenery underground, and more offices, small rehearsal rooms and a canteen above-ground. Across the street, we are supposed to get a utility plant which will house a rehearsal stage with a pit, duplicating the man stage, two other rehearsal stages, a ballet room, a chorus room, bigger rehearsal rooms, and working space for our production staff." There is also talk, as there has been for years, of enlarging the orchestra pit and placing the two rows of seats lost in the back, where there is a vast space for standees.

But, in the meantime, Adler continues his juggling act, nourished and delighted by its untold intricacies. And it does get hairy because he has found that, organizationally and financially, it has made more sense to separate each of the company's components. This means that Adler has four separate boards of directors to deal with and as many different fund-raising campaigns.

"For me," the intendant says, "the variety of levels on which I work makes it perhaps easier and certainly more interesting to spend the year with than when one does only one level of opera all the time. The variety also needs more effort. Financially it is more difficult.

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But I get along with my boards, and they respect and support me."

That there are those who do not like him does not irk

Adler. "Basically I like people, and therefore I have had

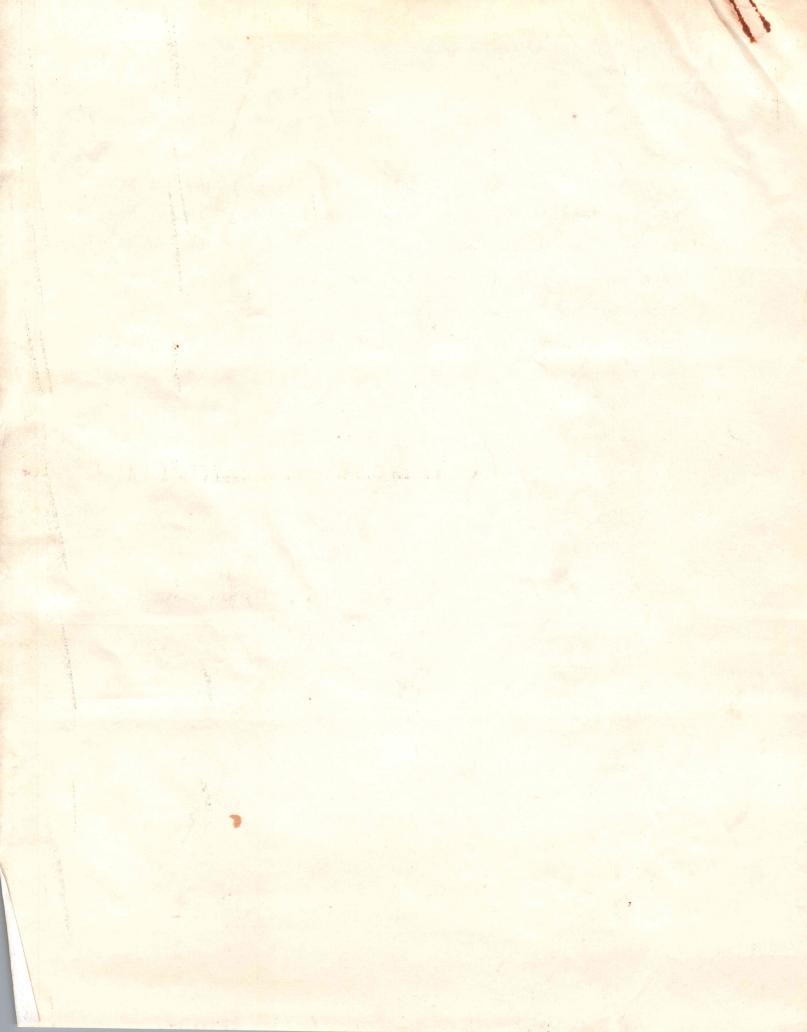
to learn not to care what they think of me, if I believe I

have something to accomplish. Some can do this by being

nice, but not many nowadays. I think and hope that I am

honest and sincere. But there are very few good losers,

and I often win."



KURT HERBERT ADLER

Kurt Herbert Adler, General Director of San Francisco Opera, assumed his current position as guiding spirit of one of the world's great opera companies in 1953, upon the death of his predecessor, Gaetano Merola, founder of San Francisco Opera.

Adler was engaged by Merola as conductor and chorus director of the Opera in 1943. He had behind him a brilliant musical career. Born and educated in Vienna, he served as conductor for the Max Reinhardt theaters there when he was twenty, and was assistant to Toscanini at Salzburg for several seasons. After conducting at the Vienna Volksoper and opera houses in Germany, Italy and Czechoslovakia, the young conductor came to the United States in 1938. Shortly after arriving in this country Adler became a conductor at the Chicago Opera, followed by his appointment to the staff of San Francisco Opera.

Under the direction of Kurt Herbert Adler, the Company has achieved its present high rank among the world's artistic institutions. Adler has notably broadened the Company's repertoire and has increased the length of the season more than 100%. During the 1937 season, 23 performances were given. This past season (1974) the Company gave a total of 60 performances.

It has been Kurt Herbert Adler's consistent policy to present operas of great merit which have not previously been given in San Francisco or in the United States, as well as the basic works of the operatic repertoire. American premieres performed by the Company under his aegis include Strauss' "Die Frau ohne Schatten," Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Walton's "Troilus and Cressida," Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites," Shostakovich's "Katerina Ismailova," Janacek's "The Makropolus Case," Berlioz' "Les Troyens" and Milhaud's "Christopher Columbus."

Another feature of Adler's direction of the Company has been the presentation of the more unusual operas including Verdi's "Nabucco" and "Macbeth," Berg's "Wozzeck" and "Lulu," Rimsky-Korsakov's

"Coq d'Or," Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress," Zandonai's "Francesca da Rimini," Strauss' "Capriccio" and "Ariadne auf Naxos," Bellini's "I Puritani" and "La Sonnambula," Rossini's "La Cenerentola," and Janacek's "Jenufa."

It is, of course, the duty of the chief administrator to offer "new" talent within the framework of the opera season, and in this respect Kurt Herbert Adler has amassed an enviable record. He has been responsible for important "discoveries" of American singers, among them Leontyne Price, Marilyn Horne, Jess Thomas and Jane Marsh. At the same time, he has brought to America for the first time much of Europe's most illustrious operatic talent: Birgit Nilsson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Sena Jurinac, Leonie Rysanek, Boris Christoff, Geraint Evans, Richard Lewis, Gabriella Tucci, Sandor Konya, Marie Collier, Graziella Sciutti, Anja Silja and Teresa Zylis-Gara.

While readily admitting to the importance of the established operatic stars in any company, it is also his firm conviction that it is the task of an opera company to develop tomorrow's performers and encourage talented young singers. To this end he founded the San Francisco Opera Auditions in 1954, and the Merola Opera Program, an intensive training course for gifted young artists supervised by the San Francisco Opera staff, was begun under his guidance in 1957.

Western Opera Theater, an educational and touring subsidiary created in 1967, now tours the western United States from New Mexico to Alaska, performing for new audiences and offering a wide variety of opera workshops. And yet another member was added to the San Francisco Opera family in February of this year: Brown Bag Opera, a series of informal lunch-hour programs performed in parks, plazas and corporations throughout the city of San Francisco by singers from all facets of San Francisco Opera. Mr. Adler has built a structure for San Francisco Opera which enables the parent Company to offer young American artists a range of performing opportunities that is unequaled anywhere in the country.

For his services to music in this country and in Europe,
Mr. Adler has been decorated by the governments of Italy, Austria,
Germany and Russia, and in 1973 he received San Francisco's
highest honor when Mayor Joseph Alioto presented him with the
St. Francis of Assisi Award.



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RELEASE	
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By Bill

KURT HERBERT ADLER

Born in Vienna, Austria, 1905.

Educated at Musical Academy and the University of Vienna.

First conducting position was in the theatres of Max Reinhardt, to which he was engaged at the age of 20. Held this post for 3 years, and returned frequently as guest conductor thereafter.

During years 1928-38, conducted in leading opera houses of Germany, Italy, and 6zecho-slovakia, as well as in Vienna. Besides conducting the entire standard Italian, German, French operatic repertoire, he conducted extensively in the orchestral field, both in radio and symphony concerts - particularly the Vienna Concert Orchestra.

Was assistant conductor under Toscanini at the Salzburg Music Festival and also instructor at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in 1936-37.

Came to the US in 1938, to join the Chicago Opera Co. with which he remained for 5 years. Married in 1940; became a citizen in 1941; has 2 children.

Conducted Symphony concerts in Grant Park, Chicago, in 1941-42; and appeared as guest conductor of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra.

In '45 he conducted for the New Opera Company bb New York, the "Merry Widow" with Jan Kiepura. Also made guest appearances with other opera companies in the East, leading performances with Metropolitan Opera stars.

At present Artistic Director of the San Francisco Opera Company to which post he was appointed in 1953. Held position of chorus director of the San Francisco Opera since 1943.

Other activities:

Standard Broadcast - 1949, 1953, 1954 University of California Symphony Orchestra, guest conductor - 1949-50

U. of Calif. lecturer since 1949 S.F. Conservatory Artistic advisor, opera classes and orchestra, since 49.

Conductor, SF Annual Midsummer Festival (Stern Grove), opera and symphony concerts since 144.

A biographical sketch appears in "Who's Who".





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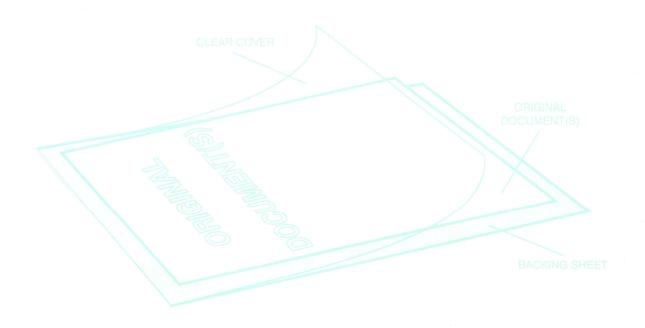
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Concert: 'A Mirror' 4/6/18

By DONAL HENAHAN

ECAUSE musical composition, mathematics and magic inter-connect in so many obvious and possibly ultimate ways, composers throughout history have composers throughout history have been drawn to the subject that embraces all three: numerology. Take, for instance, the British composer Peter Maxwell, whose work for chamber orchestra, "A Mirror of Whitening Light" (1977), was given its United States premiere on Tuesday night at Town Hall by the youthful ensemble that calls itself the Music Project.

This convoluted 20-minute piece, bearing the Latin subtitle "Sueculum Luminis Dealbensis" and dedicated to

Luminis Dealbensis" and dedicated to Roger Sessions, is based, according to the composer, "on the number eight and the Magic Square of Mercurius." The subtitle refers, he says, to the alchemical "purification or whitening process by which a base metal may be transformed into gold and by extentransformed into gold and by extension to the purification of the human

In previous works, Mr. Maxwell Davies has shown a fascination with historical arcana ("Eight Songs for a Mad King") as well as with the disturbing mixture of science and mysticism that infected thought in the Dark Ages, However, in "A Mirror of Whitening Light" this listener could detect none of the old-music quotations or other musical allusions that the composer has sometimes exploited. Rather, the piece goes along in abstract style, makpiece goes along in abstract style, making heavy use of slowly paced melodic fragments over sustained tremolos, and ostinatos on all instruments.

ostinatos on all instruments.

At times each player seems to be going a different way, which makes for richly embroidered textures, but also contributes to a general sense of minessness. The piece winds down with a lyrical, thinly scored kind of coda, but for the most part had little variety of mood and no distinctive profile. Gerard Schwarz conducted the 14 file. Gerard Schwarz conducted the 14

with mathematical instrumentalists precision, but if there was magic inherent in the score he did not bring it

The Music Project otherwise offered Barber's "Summer Music" (Op. 31) for woodwind quintet, Dohnanyi's Serenade in C for violin, viola and cello, and Mahler's rarely heard one-movement Piano Quartet in A minor. The performances, by players who all looked too young to vote, were well-rehearsed and made up in vitality what they sometimes lacked in interpretative

Events Today

Theater

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, by Shakespeare; directed by John Henry Davis; presented by the Equity Library Theater, 103d Street and Riverside Drive, 8.

Film

CALM PREVAILS, a German work directed by Peter Lilienthal, at the Film Forum, 15 Vandam Street.

Music

METROPOLITAN OPERA, Lincoln Center, Strauss's Die Frau ohne Schatten," 8. Die Frau ohne Schatten," 8.

NEW YORK CITY OPERA, New York State Theater,
NEW Content of the Con oncavallo's "Pagliacci," 8.
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC, Avery Fisher, Lincoln Center, 8:30.
BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Carnegle Hall, 8.
MUSICA SACRA ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS, Rogers
Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 8.
CARLOS VILLA, violin, 92d Street Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. at
Lexington Ayenue, 8.

Lexinston Avenue 8.
DAVID HOLZMAN, planist, Carnegie Recital Hall, 8.
DAVID HOLZMAN, planist, Carnegie Recital Hall, 8.
BEGGAR'S OPERA COMPANY, Donizetti's "Betly," Cami Hail, 165 West 57th Street, 8.
COMPOSERS ENSEMBLE and NEW CALLIOPE SINGERS, the Brook, 40 West 17th Street, 8.

Dance

BALLET FILM FESTIVAL, Beacon Theater, 74th Street and Broadway, "Don Quixote," 6, 8 and 10.
BALLET HISPANIC OF NEW YORK, Henry Street Thispanic Of New York, Henry Street Thispanic Chilang Chilang Chilang Ancie Company, Theater of the Riverside Church, 120th Street and Riverside Drive, 8.
JOFFREY BALLET, City Center, 55th Street Theater, "leu de Cartes," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Touch Me" and "Pineapole Poll," 8.
BERNICE JOHNSON DANCE COMPANY II, Round-about Stage One, 333 West 23d Street, 8.
HAVA KOHAY THEATER and DANCE FOUNDATION, Marymount Manhattan Theater, 221 East 71st Street, 8.

Cabaret

ZOOT SIMS, saxophonist, and his quartet, Hoppers.





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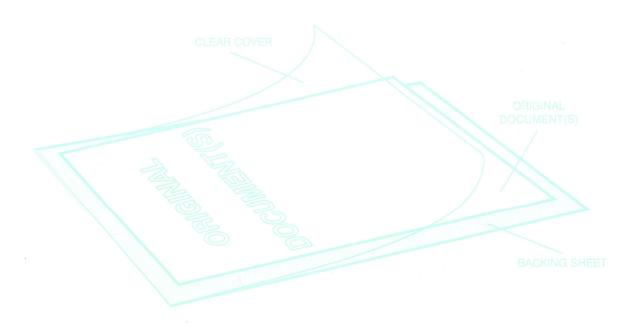
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September 15, 1976
For Immediate Release
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Paul Chaplin

KURT HERBERT ADLER HONORED BY GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA

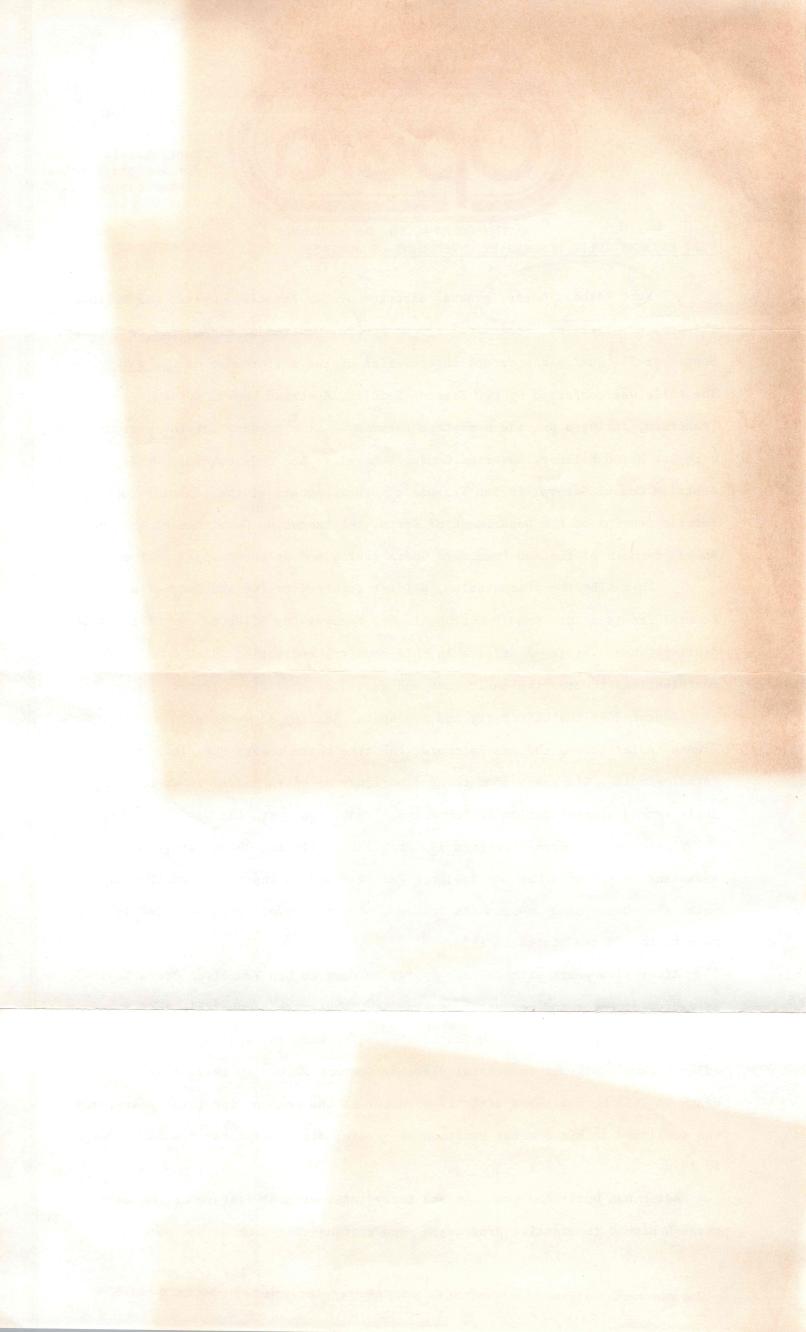
Kurt Herbert Adler, general director of San Francisco Opera, was bestowed the honorary title of "Professor" by the Federal Government of Austria on Tuesday, September 14, during the second intermission of the performance of <u>Die Walküre</u>. The title was conferred by Dr. Frances Seidler, Austrian Consul General in San Francisco, during a private backstage ceremony. Also present for the presentation were Dr. Heimo Kellner, Austrian Consul General in Los Angeles, Karl Weber, former Austrian Consul General in San Francisco, other members of the consular corps, Mrs. Bernice Behrens of the Department of State, the Executive Committee of the Opera Board, members of the San Francisco Opera staff, and selected opera patrons.

In making the presentation, Seidler referred to the statement from Austrian Federal President Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger, recognizing Adler as one of the most distinguished Austrian-Americans in this country, and noting Adler's extensive contributions towards the enrichment and growth of American culture.

Educated at the University and the State Academy of Music of his native Vienna, Adler joined the Max Reinhardt theatres there toward the close of his formal studies. Six years conducting experience at opera houses in Germany and Italy served as preparation for conductors' positions with the Vienna Volksoper and the Vienna Concert Orchestra from 1934 to 1936, following which he became an assistant to Toscanini at the Salzburg Festival and an instructor at the Salzburg Mozarteum. Conducting assignments in Czechoslovakia immediately preceded Adler's move to the United States in 1938.

After five years with Chicago Opera, he came to San Francisco Opera in 1943 as chorus director and conductor, making his debut with a memorable performance of <u>Cavalleria Rusticana</u>, which featured Dusolina Giannini and Charles Kullman. Adler became assistant to general director Gaetano Merola in 1949. After Merola's death in 1953 he was named artistic director of the company for three years, and was confirmed in his present position as general director of San Francisco Opera in 1956.

Adler has built the prestige and truly international stature of the company through highly imaginative programing and casting that combine new works with



known and loved repertoire favorites, a fact verified by the eleven operas offered during the current season. In addition, he has dealt creatively with the need to foster young talents and to expand the audience for opera. To these ends he has founded the four subsidiary companies of the San Francisco Opera family - the Merola Opera Fund, sponsor of the Merola Opera Program; Spring Opera Theater; Western Opera Theater; and Brown Bag Opera.

Since his arrival in San Francisco, Maestro Adler has conducted numerous operatic and symphonic concerts at Sigmund Stern Grove's Midsummer Music Festival, San Francisco Symphony youth concerts, and such memorable performances at San Francisco Opera as the 1973 <u>La Traviata</u> with Beverly Sills and last season's highly regarded <u>Il Trovatore</u> with Renata Scotto. On Sunday, September 12, he was on the podium for the Golden Gate Park concert with Miss Sills, which attracted a gathering of over 25,000 people. Adler has recently added a new dimension to his conducting activities, wielding his baton for an operatic recital disc with Luciano Pavarotti, to be released this Christmas. Later this week, the maestro will lead a new production of Verdi's epic masterpiece, <u>La Forza del Destino</u>.

The Teatro Fenice of Venice and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre have awarded him medals of distinction, and his own adopted city of San Francisco has conferred its highest honor, the St. Francis of Assisi Award in 1973. A director of the America-Italy Society, he has been named a Cavaliere of the Italian Republic and decorated with that country's Star of Solidarity. Adler has received Austria's Great Medal of Honor, Germany's the Officer's Cross, and the Federal Republic of Germany's Order of Merit Commander's Cross.

Member of the International Association of Opera directors and Vice President of O.P.E.R.A. America, he is a trustee of the National Opera Institute and a member of the Central Opera Service's Professional Committee. He holds honorary Doctor of Music degrees from the College of the Pacific and the University of San Francisco and the Berkeley Citation from the University of California at Berkeley.





May 24, 1976
For Immediate Release
Please contact:
Paul Chaplin

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO HONORS KURT HERBERT ADLER

Kurt Herbert Adler, general director of San Francisco Opera, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree by the University of San Francisco during commencement exercises held Sunday afternoon, May 23, at the Civic Auditorium. The degree was conferred by the Reverend William C. McInnes, S.J., president of the University of San Francisco, in recognition of Adler's achievements in broadening the appeal of opera, encouraging young people to pursue careers in the performing arts and in contributing to the artistic enrichment of the citizenry of the Bay area.

Adler is an enthusiastic believer in familiarizing young people with their musical heritage and in encouraging new audiences to explore the art form of opera. His life-long involvement in education has included teaching and conducting at the annual Pacific Music Camp in Stockton, California, and serving as artistic advisor and conductor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He was instrumental in the founding of the internationally acclaimed San Francisco Boys Chorus and has led San Francisco Symphony youth concerts. The maestro has appeared frequently as a lecturer and guest conductor at both the University of California, Berkeley and U.C. Extension.

Kurt Herbert Adler's ability to work with young talent was brought to the forefront when he once tackled the seemingly impossible task of leading a combined orchestra, band and chorus which totaled 3,100. The occasion was a "music clinic" at the Civic Auditorium in Stockton, and the clarinet section alone numbered 167.

Never one to accept traditional teaching methods, Adler has always stressed the need to test the abilities of young musicians, urging them to play Mozart, Stravinsky and Borodin instead of relying on the more easily grasped repertoire.

(more)

General director of San Francisco Opera since 1953, Adler is responsible for founding subsidiary companies designed to develop and stimulate the creative abilities and talents of young American artists. Through the affiliated organizations — the Merola Opera Program, Brown Bag Opera, Western Opera Theater and Spring Opera Theater — Adler has established a structure which provides a range of educational and performing opportunities unequalled in the country.

Adler is a recent recipient of the Berkeley Citation, awarded by the University of California at Berkeley; he also holds the first honorary Doctor of Music degree conferred by the University of the Pacific. His many artistic achievements have been recognized in this country and in Europe, with decorations by the governments of Italy, Austria, Germany and Russia. In 1973 the city of San Francisco bestowed upon him the St. Francis of Assisi Award, the city's highest honor.

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The Editor, Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians Macmillan, 44 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JY, England

Full name

Nom et prénoms

Vor- und Zunamen

KURT HERBERT ADLER

Professional name

Pseudonyme

Künstlername

Permanent address (not for publication)

Adresse habituelle (ne sera pas publiée)

Ständige Anschrift (nicht für Veröffentlichung)

WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL, 94/02

Birth (date and place)

Date et lieu de naissance

Geburtsort und Datum

VIENNA, APRIL 2, 1905

Nationality (former and present)

Nationalité d'origine et nationalité acquise

Staatsbürgerschaft (vormalige und gegenwärtige)

AUSTRIA, U.S.A.

Style and honours

HON. DOCTOR OF MUSIC (UNIV. OF PACIFIC)

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Principal training

Etudes principales

Hauptsächliche Ausbildung

MUSIKAKADEMIE) VIENNA

Début

Débuts

as Conductos, Vienna 1925

Erstes Auftreten

(MAX REINHARDT THEATERS)





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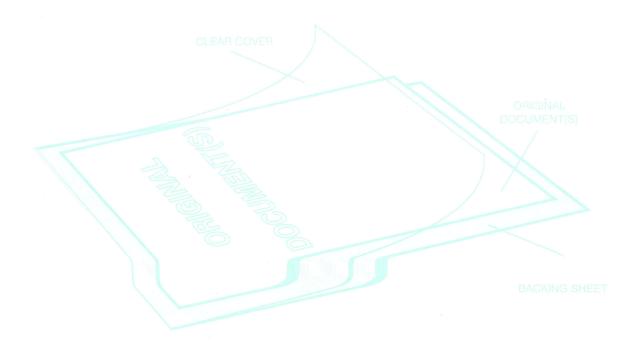
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et articles écrits par vous ou sur vous; publications, éditions; associations
avec un ensemble (dates); si vous jouez d'un instrument à cordes, et que vous
possédez un instrument rare, veuillez indiquer le nom du luthier et la date de
fabrication; tout autre détail que vous jugeriez utile d'incorporer dans le
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Allgemeines, wie:
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Thres Erachtens in Ihre Eintragung aufgenommen werden sollten.

opera and Symplony Conductos:

1928-38 Austria, Germany, Italy, Gethoslowickia

1938 — U.S.A. Italy

Since 1954: General Director of San Francisco Opera

(SFO Subsidiaries: Merola Opera Program

Nestern Opera Theater

Spring Opera Theater.

Additional information for groups, such as:

members of the ensemble (former and present); brief details of training;
how, where and when you came together; début.

Renseignements complémentaires pour les groupes, tels que:

membres de l'ensemble (antérieurement et actuellement); détails succincts
des études; comment, où et quand vous vous êtes associés; débuts.

Zusätzliche Informationen über Gruppen, wie z.B.:

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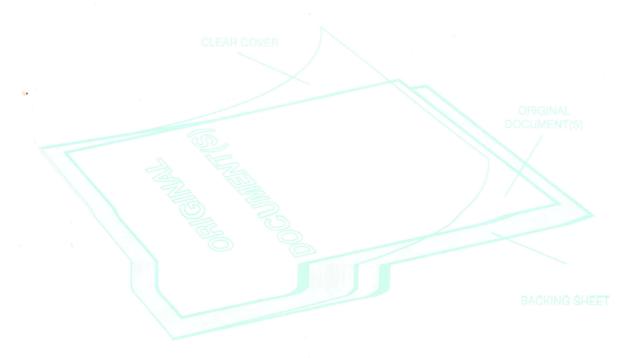
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ADLER, KURT HERBERT

Date of Birth: April 2, 1905

Place of Birth: Vienna, Austria

Profession: Conductor

Education: Vienna State Academy of Music, 1922-26; University of

Vienna, 1923-27

Personal Details: married Diantha Warfel, July 7, 1940 (divorced); children: Kristin Diantha, Ronald Huntington; married Nancy Miller, August 23, 1965.

Professional Positions: Conductor, Max Reinhardt theaters, Vienna, 1925-28; Conductor, various opera houses in Germany and Italy, 1928-34; Conductor, Vienna Volksoper, Vienna Concert Orchestra, 1934-36; Assistant Conductor to Arturo Toscanini at Salzburg Festival, 1936; Instructor, Salzburg Mozarteum, 1936-37; Conductor, opera and radio, Czechoslovakia, 1936-38; Conductor, Chicago Opera Company, 1938-43, Grant Park Concerts, Chicago, 1941-42; Guest conductor, Illinois Symphony Orchestra, 1942; Chorus director/conductor, San Francisco Opera, 1943-53; Conductor, annual Midsummer Music Festival, opera and symphony, San Francisco, 1944-; New Opera Company, New York, 1945; Lecturer/guest conductor, University of California Symphony Orchestra, 1949-50; Artistic Advisor, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 1949-52; Conductor, San Francisco Symphony youth concerts, 1949-52; Guest conductor, Standard Hour Symphony broadcasts (NBC); Assistant to general director, San Francisco Opera, 1952; Artistic Director, San Francisco Opera, 1953-56; General Director, 1956-; Guest conductor, Pacific Music Camp, 1952-61; Hollywood Bowl, 1954-56; Supervision of Merola Opera Program, San Francisco, 1957-; Guest conductor, San Carlo Opera, Naples, 1958; Founder and director, Spring Opera Theater, 1961-, Western Opera Theater, 1966 - , San Francisco; General director, Music Center Opera Association, Los Angeles, 1969.

Membership in Societies/Clubs; Trustee, National Opera Institute; Founder/Vice President, O.P.E.R.A. America; Member, International Association of Opera Directors; Member, Professional Committee, Central Opera Service.

Biographical Listings: Who's Who in America Wer ist Wer
Who's Who in the World Men of Achievement

Honors and Prizes: Honorary Doctor of Music, College of the Pacific, 1956; Star of Solidarity, Italy, 1957; Officer's Cross, Germany 1959; Great Medal of Honor, Austria, 1961; Medal, Teatro Fenice, Venice, 1961; Cavaliere Italian Republic, 1965, Commander's Cross, Order of Merit, Germany, 1969; Bolshoi Theater Medal, USSR, 1972 (First American recipient); St. Francis of Assisi Award, City of San Francisco, 1973.

1974

KURT HERBERT ADLER BIOGRAPHY

- General director since 1953, Mr. Adler joined the San Francisco Opera in 1943, after conducting with the Chicago Opera.
- Born in Vienna and educated at the Vienna State Academy of Music and the University of Vienna, Mr. Adler was conductor for Vienna's Max Reinhardt theaters and assistant to Arturo Toscanini at Salzburg festivals.
- Mr. Adler conducted at the Vienna Volksoper and opera houses throughout Italy, Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, prior to coming to the United States in 1938.
- Under Mr. Adler's directorship, the San Francisco Opera has
 developed into an internationally famous company, with a
 complete program of training and development for young artists,
 as well as a fall opera season of major importance presenting
 the world's greatest operatic artists.
- Mr. Adler's philosophy of premiering new works and presenting lesser-known works by major composers has resulted in an unusually diversified repertory for the San Francisco Opera.
- His conviction that an opera company must encourage young artists and participate in their development led to the founding of the San Francisco Opera Auditions, Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater, and Spring Opera Theater.
 - Among his personal honors, Mr. Adler has received high decorations from the governments of Italy, Austria, and Germany, and a Doctor of Music (honorary) degree from University of the Pacific. Mr. Adler recently received the Bolshoi Medal, and was the first American so honored. Mr. Adler is a member of the boards of the National Opera Institute and O.P.E.R.A. America. Mr. Adler is married to the former Nancy Miller and now resides in San Francisco.

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MR. MARTIN BERNHEIMER, MUSIC CRITIC LOS ANGELES TIMES

TIMES. MIRROR SGUARE



Medical SF. Examiner

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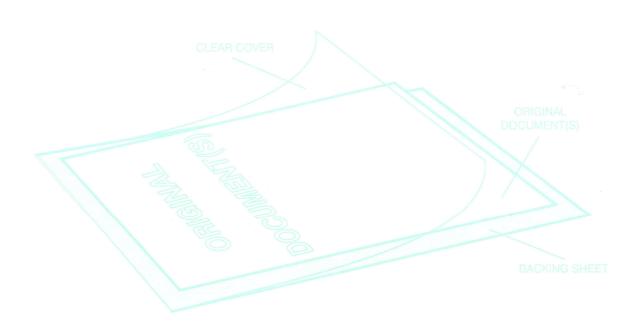
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The San Francisco Opera Association in conjunction with The San Francisco Opera Guild

presents

Anniversary Gala

In celebration of the Gold and Silver Jubilees of Kurt Herbert Adler

Sunday, November 19, 1978, at 7 p.m. War Memorial Opera House

Masters of Ceremonies: Dorothy Kirsten, Regina Resnik, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Sir Geraint Evans, Terry McEwen, Walter Slezak

Overture, Der Fliegende Holländer

Wagner

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Silvio Varviso, conductor

Prize Song, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Wagner

Spas Wenkoff

Silvio Varviso, conductor

Depuis le jour, Louise

Charpentier

Dorothy Kirsten

John Pritchard, conductor

In uomini, in soldati, Così fan tutte

Graziella Sciutti

John Pritchard, conductor

Aprite un po' quegli occhi, Le Nozze di Figaro

Cesare Siepi

Mozart

John Pritchard, conductor

Vesti la giubba, I Pagliacci

Iames McCracken

Leoncavallo

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

Lucine Amara

Morrò, ma prima in grazia, Un Ballo in Maschera

Verdi

Janos Ferencsik, conductor

Nemico della patria, Andrea Chenier

Louis Quilico

Childrens' prayer, Hänsel und Gretel

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor Giordano

San Francisco Boys Chorus

Humperdinck Pur ti miro, L'Incoronazione di Poppea Calvin Simmons, conductor

Monteverdi

Carol Vaness, Barry McCauley John Pritchard, conductor

Ernani, involami, Ernani

Leona Mitchell

Verdi

Calvin Simmons, conductor

Mei' Muatterl war a' Wienerin

Walter Berry

Gruber

Ianos Ferencsik, conductor

Vieni, t'affretta!, Macbeth

Gwyneth Jones

Verdi

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

INTERMISSION

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate, Nabucco

San Francisco Opera Chorus

Del futuro nel buio discerno, Nabucco

Giorgio Tozzi

Verdi

Richard Bradshaw, conductor

Pe sub flori ma legana
i and S'a dus cucul de p''aici

e p"aici Ileana Cotrubas

Brediceanu

Philip Eisenberg at the piano

Song of the Flea

Nicola Rossi-Lemeni

Moussorgsky

Calvin Simmons, conductor

Silvio, a quest' ora, I Pagliacci

Mary Costa, Allan Monk

Leoncavallo

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

Al dolce guidami castel natio, *Anna Bolena*Donizetti

Leyla Gencer

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

A new work Anonymous Regina Resnik

Calvin Simmons, conductor

Amor ti vieta, Fedora

Giacomo Aragall

Giordano Calvin Simmons, conductor

Meine Lippen, sie küssen so heiss, Giuditta

Etta Leonie Rysanek

Janos Ferencsik, conductor

Cortigiani, vil razza dannata, Rigoletto

to Ingvar Wixell

Verdi Silv

Silvio Varviso, conductor

Zweite Brautnacht, Die Aegyptische Helena

lena Leontyne Price

Strauss

Janos Ferencsik, conductor

Finale, triumphal scene, Aïda

Gwyneth Jones, Irene Dalis, James McCracken, Chester Ludgin, Giorgio

Verdi

Tozzi, Alexander Malta San Francisco Opera Chorus

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Complimentary champagne and white wine served during intermission at all bars courtesy of Almaden Vineyards.

Anniversary Gala Reception and Patrons Dinner made possible through a much appreciated gift from The Shaklee Corporation

Wines and champagne served during the Gala evening generously donated by Almaden Vineyards Lodging for Gala participants and special guests provided by Fairmont and Clift Hotels

The Anniversary Gala is broadcast in its entirety live by KKHI, made possible by a grant from Bay View Federal Savings and Loan Association. The Gala is also heard live tonight on KUSC in Los Angeles and WFMT in Chicago. We extend special thanks to the American Guild of Musical Artists and American Federation of Musicians, Local 6, for their cooperation.

Audio-visual design and production by Jack Morton Productions, San Francisco. Audio-visual equipment by McCune Audio-Visual, San Francisco. Audio equipment by AKG Acoustics, Vienna.

Tickets courtesy of Globe Ticket Company. Knabe is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera. This evening has been approved as a benefit by the Theatre Authority, Inc.

The San Francisco Opera Association is grateful to its many friends and company members who have contributed their services to make this evening possible.

The San Francisco Opera Guild will present its annual Fol de Rol at the Civic Auditorium on November 12, 1979.

The War Memorial Opera House is owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco through the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial. Honorable George R. Moscone, Mayor, City and County of San Francisco.

Trustees: Fred Campagnoli, president; Philip S. Boone, vice-president; Mrs. Joseph D. Cuneo, George T. Davis, A. Adrian Gruhn, George Gund, Mrs. Walter A. Haas, Jr., Claude Jarman, Jr., Sam K. Harrison, Krikor G. Krouzian, Oscar M. Preston; Michael Raines, managing director; Thelma Shelley, executive secretary and assistant managing director.

The San Francisco Opera Association in conjunction with The San Francisco Opera Guild versary Gala In celebration of the Gold and Silver Jubilees of Kurt Herbert Adler Sunday, November 19, 1978, at 7 p.m. War Memorial Opera House Masters of Ceremonies: Dorothy Kirsten, Regina Resnik, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Sir Geraint Evans, Terry McEwen, Walter Slezak Overture, Der Fliegende Holländer San Francisco Opera Orchestra Silvio Varviso, conductor Wagner Spas Wenkoff To Bulgarian Silvio Varviso, conductor Prize Song, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg Wagner Depuis le jour, *Louise* Dorothy Kirsten John Pritchard, conductor Charpentier In uomini, in soldati, Così fan tutte Graziella Sciutti John Pritchard, conductor Aprite un po' quegli occhi, Le Nozze di Figaro Cesare Siepi Mozart John Pritchard, conductor Vesti la giubba, I Pagliacci James McCracken Leoncavallo Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor Morrò, ma prima in grazia, Un Ballo in Maschera Lucine Amara Janos Ferencsik, conductor Verdi Nemico della patria, Andrea Chenier Louis Quilico Giordano Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor Childrens' prayer, Hänsel und Gretel San Francisco Boys Chorus Humperdinck Calvin Simmons, conductor Carol Vaness, Barry McCauley Pur ti miro, L'Incoronazione di Poppea John Pritchard, conductor Monteverdi Ernani, involami, Ernani Leona Mitchell -Verdi Calvin Simmons, conductor Mei' Muatterl war a' Wienerin Walter Berry Gruber Janos Ferencsik, conductor Vieni, t'affretta!, Macbeth Gwyneth Jones Verdi Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor **INTERMISSION**

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate, *Nabuc*co San Francisco Opera Chorus Del futuro nel buio discerno, Nabucco Giorgio Tozzi Richard Bradshaw, conductor Pe sub flori ma leganai and S'a dus cucul de p"aici Ileana Cotrubas Philip Eisenberg at the piano Brediceanu Song of the Flea Nicola Rossi-Lemeni Moussorgsky Calvin Simmons, conductor Silvio, a quest' ora, I Pagliacci Mary Costa, Allan Monk Leoncavallo Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor Al dolce guidami castel natio, Anna Bolena Leyla Gencer Donizetti Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor A new work Regina Resnik Calvin Simmons, conductor Anonymous Amor ti vieta, Fedora Giacomo Aragall Giordano Calvin Simmons, conductor Leonie Rysanek Meine Lippen, sie küssen so heiss, Giuditta Janos Ferencsik, conductor Lehár Cortigiani, vil razza dannata, Rigoletto Ingvar Wixell (Cos pres Silvio Varviso, conductor Verdi Zweite Brautnacht, Die Aegyptische Helena Leontyne Price Strauss Janos Ferencsik, conductor Gwyneth Jones, Irene Dalis, James Finale, triumphal scene, Aïda McCracken, Chester Ludgin, Giorgio Verdi Tozzi, Alexander Malta San Francisco Opera Chorus Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, conductor ACKNOWLEDGMENTS Complimentary champagne and white wine served during/intermission at all bars courtesy of Almaden Vineyards. Anniversary Gala Reception and Patrons Dinner made possible through a much appreciated gift from The Shaklee Corporation Wines and champagne served during the Gala evening generously donated by Almaden Vineyards Lodging for Gala participants and special guests provided by Fairmont and Clift Hotels The Anniversary Gala is broadcast in its entirety live by KKHI, made possible by a grant from Bay View Federal Savings and Loan Association. The Gala is also heard live tonight on KUSC in Los Angeles and WFMT in Chicago. We extend special thanks to the American Guild of Musical Artists and American Federation of Musicians, Local 6, for their cooperation. Audio-visual design and production by Jack Morton Tickets courtesy of Globe Ticket Company. Knabe is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera. Productions, San Francisco. This evening has been approved as a benefit by the Audio-visual equipment by McCune Audio-Visual, San Francisco. Theatre Authority, Inc. Audio equipment by AKG Acoustics, Vienna. The San Francisco Opera Association is The San Francisco Opera Guild grateful to its many friends and company members will present its annual Fol-de/Rol at the Civic Auditorium who have contributed their services on November 12, 1979. to make this evening possible. The War Memorial Opera House is owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco through the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial. Honorable George R. Moscone, Mayor, City and County of San Francisco.

Trustees: Fred Campagnoli, president; Philip S. Boone, vice-president; Mrs. Joseph D. Cuneo, George T. Davis, A. Adrian Gruhn, George Gund, Mrs. Walter A. Haas, Jr., Claude Jarman, Jr., Sam K. Harrison, Krikor G. Krouzian, Oscar M. Preston; Michael Raines, managing director; Thelma Shelley, executive secretary and assistant managing director.

Ios Angeles Times

Times Mirror Square Los Angeles, CA 90053 213 237-5000

February 11, 1988

Mrs. Kurt Herbert Adler One Allen Lane Ross, CA 94957

Dear Nancy:

I don't want to be tacky or maudlin, and I know you don't expect cliches from me. But I must tell you how sorry I was--no, how shaken--to hear of Kurt's death. Many, many people share your loss.

Kurt was tough. But, beneath that crust of toughness, some of us discerned a certain sweetness, not to mention such obvious virtues as intellect, sensitivity, dedication, vision and integrity. Also guts.

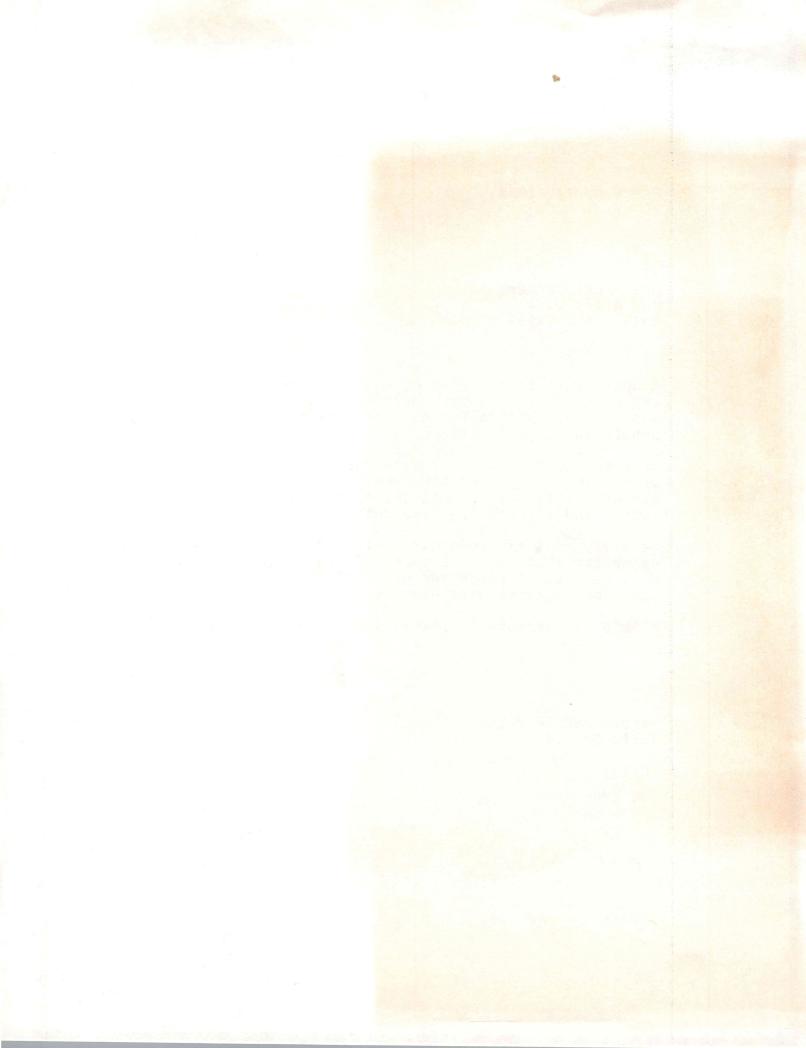
He always was extraordinarly kind to me, even courtly, no matter what terrible things I might have written the week before. I respected him enormously. I liked him, too, and began to miss him the day Terry took over.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do...

Martin Bernheimer Music Critic

MB:saj





Kurt Herbert Adler, whose name had been synonymous with grand opera on the West Coast for three decades and the last of that rare breed of impresario/maestros who often conducted the casts they assembled, directed and paid, is dead.

He was 82 and died at 6 p.m. Tuesday of a heart attack at his home in Ross, near San Francisco.



Los Angeles Times Kurt Herbert Adler

Hours earlier, in what proved to be an ironic twist, his successor as general director of the San Francisco Opera, Terence McEwen, only the third director in the history of the 66-yearold opera company many consider the nation's second-best after the Metropolitan, had resigned for health reasons.

The paunchy and fiery Adler, often cantankerous, sometimes feared but always respected, was the undisputed reigning presence

on the Western opera scene from 1953 until his 1981 retirement.

He resurrected American singers, brought European talent to U.S. stages often before those vocalists ever sang at the Met (where he sometimes was confused with its chorus master Kurt Adler, who died in 1977) and produced a mixed bag of operas ranging from the long-forgotten "Blood Moon" to the U.S. premiere of Richard Strauss' "Die Frau Ohne Schatten.

Please see ADLER, Page 32

ER: San Francisco Opera l

Continued from Page 3
Famous or flops, all were done with the rowdy flair that marked rium in Los Angeles. for many years the Shrine Audito-Opera House in San Francisco and his tenure at the War Memorial Mario del Monaco, Renata Tebaldi covery of such fabled voices as audiences were ecstatic at his dis-And if his critics found him ruthless at the bargaining table, his

ered Adler her personal paterfamiand Leontyne Price, who consid-Tito Gobbi, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf One example of the Adler temperament surfaced at a gala in 1978 honoring his 50 years in opera, 25 responded.

as head of the San Francisco company. Lofti Mansouri, then an maestro, severe enough so that Mansouri offered to resign on the Adler aide, received a furious dressing down from the feisty

"Don't be so sensitive," Adler

ments on tempo, lighting, staging one conductor, according to an during rehearsals offering compranos received both in equal the company. Stagehands and soencouragement equally throughout article in the San Francisco Chronshares as he stalked the aisles icle, was so enraged at Adler that Adler spread his wrath and his

He was as critical of the press as it could be of him and banned one critic, Stephanie von Buchau, from stay. Adler finally persuaded stringent operatic standards, it is because I learned them from Adler's company " his performances forever. She responded: "If I have exceptionally him

He offended Placido Domingo by calling Luciano Pavarotti the "primissimo tenor" but then charmed the Spanish singer back ler's company. . . . into his fold. And he could laugh at himself as a constant "bitcher" Adler later called a truce.

he ran from the rehearsal hall and was on his way to the airport when to

geles where the Shrine Auditorium Gaetano Merola into 14 weeks. No can I do it better?"

He did it better by expanding the five-week season he inherited from five-week season he inherited from the fiveduring the San Francisco compamore often than not was sold out one benefited more than Los An-

While the San Francisco-Los Angeles agreement dated to 1937, it was during Adler's reign that it ny's annual sojourn south. as staged during the last regular tour in 1964. (The company reflourished with 16 individual operbefore an agreement was signed turned for one final season in 1969 between the Music Center and the

Please see ADLER, Page 33

"When I hear applause, I think how

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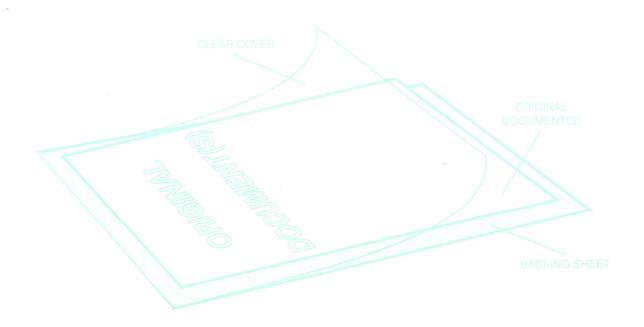
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Mos Angeles Times ADLER: San Francisco Opera Impresario Dies

Continued from Page 32

Adler was born in Vienna to an arts-loving engineer who saw to his son's education to such a point that at age 13 young Kurt could sight read Wagner's "Die Walkure." He conducted his first work under the fabled stage director Max Reinhardt at the age of 20 after studying at the University of Vienna's Music-Historical Institute.

He credited Reinhardt with the initial inspiration for his long career when the stern director told him, "Remember, young man, in the theater nothing is impossible."

Adler conducted in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Austria as well as his native land and briefly assisted Arturo Toscanini at Salzburg in 1936.

The threat of the Anschluss sent him to Chicago where he joined the Grand Opera Co. as conductor and chorus master. Two years later he joined the San Francisco company after Merola supposedly told him: "How can anyone live in Chicago? Chicago is merely a place to change

Adler rose from chorus master to conductor to Merola's chief deputy and was the logical choice to succeed the man who had founded the San Francisco company in 1922 when Merola died in 1953. He became artistic director and then general director.

He inherited a modest regional company performing an abbreviated season in outmoded quarters. It was known for its casts but not its productions.

In his book, "50 Years of the San Francisco Opera," author Arthur Bloomfield writes that Adler launched "a new era, one in which staging had greater importance than ever as a basic rather than incidental factor in performance and one in which productions of contemporary operas became a more or less regular event."

Adler lured out of retirement the great conductor Pierre Monteux, director emeritus of the San Francisco Symphony. He hired tenor Richard Tucker, supervised the return of baritone Leonard Warren and surrounded those two eminent Americans with Tebaldi, Schwarzkopf, Jussi Bjoerling, Frank Guar-

* Thursday, February 11, 1988 / Part I

rera and other international stars.

He silenced his conservative critics on the opera board with long lines at the box office, lines long enough so that he could afford to gamble on the first American stage production of Cherubini's "The Portuguese Inn" and the first West Coast staging of Honegger's "Joan of Arc at the Stake."

Critic Alfred Frankenstein of the New York Times pronounced the 1954 season "the most interesting in local operatic history."

Enhanced the Repertory

In addition to lengthening the season, he enhanced the repertory, enriched the roster and sponsored vocal competitions.

By 1978 the San Francisco ensemble had produced two world and 18 American premieres, among them "Troilus and Cressida," "Dialogues of the Carmelites" and Ben-

jamin Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

In 1973 Beverly Sills helped persuade Adler to return to the podium of the War Memorial Opera House where he had absented himself for a decade.

He had stayed away, he said at the time, "because I wasn't sure you could conduct bars and dollars at the same time." He also conducted during the Hollywood Bowl's summer series and more recently in Italy. He even had a best-selling recording, "O Holy Night," with Pavarotti.

His awards range from several honorary doctorates to the Soviet's Bolshoi Theatre Medal, the first American so honored.

And his private life was equally varied. He married three times, the most recent in 1965 when he was 60 to then 23-year-old Nancy Miller, who survives him as do four children, the youngest born in 1982.

Said Martin Bernheimer, the Los Angeles Times music critic: "Kurt Herbert Adler was an autocrat. He cared, and worried, about every detail in every opera produced in 19 his house. And the San Francisco Opera was, emphatically, his house.

"He didn't just choose the repertory and select the casts. He second-guessed the conductors, oq breathed down the necks of the of stage directors, offered commands masquerading as advice to the singers. He could be irascible and aid egomaniacal. He also could be all witty and charming. Most important, he knew what he was doing and loved what he was doing.

"Opera under his leadership was of never dull, and it was often brilliant-often so brilliant, in fact, 319 that it put the richer yet more conservative Metropolitan in the



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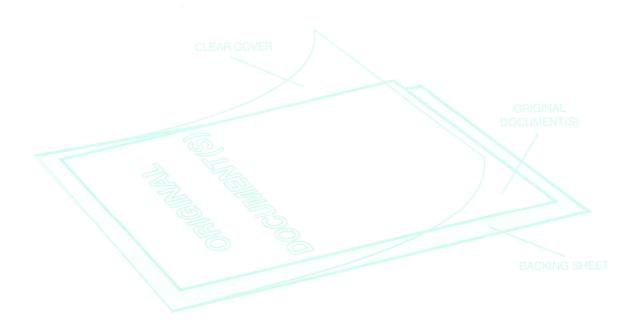
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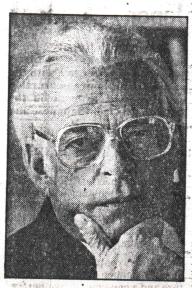
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KURT HERBERT ADLER
Opera director for 28 years

S.F. Opera's Kurt Adler Dies at 82

> By Charles Burress and Torri Minton Chronicle Staff Writers

Kurt Herbert Adler, the man who gave San Francisco a world-class opera and shaped many operatic careers, died yesterday after suffering a heart attack. He was 82.

Adler collapsed at his Ross home and was pronounced dead on arrival at Ross General Hospital at 6 p.m., said Kori Lockhart, the opera's publications editor.

Adler, the opera's general director for 28 years until 1981, left a major imprint on the San Francisco musical world.

"He has brought it (San Francisco opera) up to international standards," Lockhart said. "He was innovative, he was imaginative, he

KURT HERBERT ADLER DIES - LONGTIME S.F. OPERA CHIEF

From Page 1

was hard to get along with — he was brilliant."

"He made it a world-class opera company," said Caroline Crawford, editor of Adler's oral history at Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley.

"I think he had a great deal of vision, energy and willingness to work — incredible energy, just unmatched energy," she said. "He had the determination to achieve the very finest in opera that was possible."

Adler, the last of a breed of opera directors who also conduct, had a reputation for dynamic and sometimes difficult leadership.

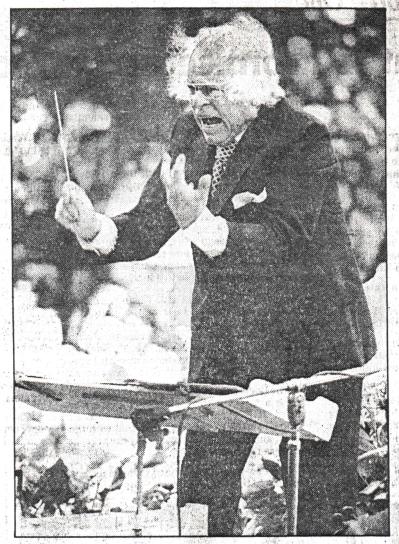
"Kurt enjoyed crisis," said his successor, Terence McEwen, who coincidentally announced his retirement yesterday. "If there wasn't one, he invented it."

When he was 74, the silver-haired maestro with blue-gray eyes told a reporter, "I never have time — I don't sleep much."

"In the past year, his health declined noticeably," said Chronicle music critic Robert Commanday, "and a bout with the flu a few months ago seemed to have taken a heavy toll. His voice never recovered its ring, and became soft and hard to make out."

Yesterday morning, eight hours before his heart attack, he sounded weak over the phone, Commanday said.

Adler's concern about who would take over after McEwen's resignation was "so real that he literally proposed that he might be willing to take over and run things for the short transition," Commanday said. "His voice was barely audible, his words hardly discernable, and yet Kurt Herbert Adler was ready to go back into the saddle once more, to help his company stay



Kurt Herbert Adler was in typical form as he conducted the 1975 opera concert before an open-air audience in Golden Gate Park

on line. That was the man." After retiring, Adler continued his involvement with the opera as general director emeritus and conductor of the opera's concerts in Golden Gate Park. He also gave occasional master classes.

He was born into a musical

home in Vienna. His father, Ernst Adler, a textile manufacturer and amateur composer, improvised on the piano. The young Adler started his career at age 6 with piano lessons.

Adler began attending opera at age 13 and through influential fami-

ly friends was a regular guest in the Imperial Box at the Vienna Opera. He went on to study clarinet, piano and percussion at the Academy of Music in Vienna. He also studied at the Vienna State Academy of Music, the Vienna Conservatory and the Music-History Institute of the University of Vienna.

Adler soon took up conducting, working with a school orchestra of friends, until he was hired at age 20 as conductor with Max Rheinhardt's theaters.

At his next job, conducting at the Kaiserslautern theater in Pfalz, he was brought into the administrative as well as the artistic side because the director was too busy with other interests.

"Being thrown into the stream, you have to do it," Adler said years later in an interview. "Since then, wherever I was, I was thrown into administrative work."

bFrom there, he went to the Volksoper in Vienna and worked at the Mozarteum in Salzburg under Arturo Toscanini and conducted in

> McEwen Tells Why He's Leaving Opera Robert Commanday's Appreciation of Adler SEE PAGE EI

Czechoslovakian opera houses before joining the Jewish exodus from Europe and joining the Chicago opera in 1938.

He first worked with the San Francisco Opera as an assistant and choral director in 1943, commuting from New York, where he was conducting the New Opera Company, to San Francisco as well as Chicago.

He joined the San Francisco Opera full time in 1949, when it was 26 years old. He was named general director in 1953.





When he took over, the opera season ran five weeks; when he left, it ran from Labor Day through December.

His achievements included a large number of American debuts of internationally ranked singers, whom he often managed to sign before the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

His record of discovering new talent is matched by few impressarios; his finds included Leontyne Price, Mary Costa, Marilyn Horne, Jess Thomas, Jane Marsh, Heinz Blankenburg and Stuart Burrows, to name but a few

"Price considered him her mentor," said Crawford. "She had pictures of three people always in her dressing room — one of those was Herbert von Karajan (Austrian conductor), the other was Sir Rudolph Bing (director of the Metropolitan Opera) and Mr. Adler."

"He had a nose for people who are up and coming, and he knew what was good before the rest of the world did," Lockhart said.

He presented several important works in American premiers, including Benjamin Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Strauss' "Woman Without a Shadow," Shostakovich's "Katarina Ismailova" and Francis Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites."

Mr. Adler had two children with his first wife, Diantha Warfel, whom he married in 1940 and divorced in 1963. In 1965, the 60-year-old opera chief married 23-year-old Nancy Miller, with whom he had two more children, the most recent one born in 1980.

Adler is survived by his wife, Nancy, of Ross, and four children, Ronald of Munich, Kristin of the Bay Area, and Roman and Sabrina of Ross.



HUGE ART THEFT: 11 OLD MASTERS WORTH \$6 MILLION / PAGE A-3



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

Kurt Herbert Adler was 82

By James Schermerhorn OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

The Maestro is dead

tal after collapsing from a heart attack in his home. He country, died Tuesday evening at Ross General Hospi-Opera second only to New York's Metropolitan in this Kurt Herbert Adler, who made the San Francisco

Mr. Adler's stars, grips and musicians called him

Opera director Page A-12 ☐ Terence McEwen resigns as S.F.

cian's tribute — the tapping of taut bows on strings at "Maestro," and his orchestra accorded him the must

He ruled opera in The City for 28 seasons, conducted The Examiner's Opera in the Park performances

singers he launched to international stardom, influand, with the new operatic works he introduced and

rarely missed a 49ers football game and fathered a enced opera around the world. Mr. Adler also drove his sports convertible too fast, - See ADLER, back page

Kurt Herbert Adler, the Maestro, made the San Francisco Opera a force to be reckoned with in the music world





ity the young conductors do not aminer critic, said: "He had a sensitiv-

crowd in minks and white ties and in 1953, Mr. Adler took an opera com and finally the music concourse at sent them out into the public schools, pany that performed for a glittering played to thousands. Golden Gate Park, where they the vineyards and pop music halls, When he became general director

accessible to everyone, the opera He said, "As long as good opera is

gram, to discover and reward young opera auditions to the public, and in public will continue to grow." 1957 founded the Merola Opera Pro-In 1954, Mr. Adler opened his

across the country. movement that spread to opera comoffice workers in 1974, he began a operatic talent. panies and symphony orchestras brown-bag lunches of the downtown When he provided music for the

six weeks to 57 performances in 11 fall season from 22 performances in the West, and extended the principal Opera Theater, taking opera through Spring Opera Theater and Western companies, the Merola Program, season in the spring and three opera Mr. Adler added a second opera

rces of Opera in the Park, and he In the 1970s he began perforthe modestly priced eater with a Sum-Terence McEwen rand opera. Mr. Ad-

reputation "for being demanding, he admit-



ner/Kim Komenich

Kurt Herbert Adler with soprano Margaret Price, Adler's son Roman at 1983 Opera in Park concer

director, and ran the complex busi-Merola, the company's first general opera after the death of Gaetano difficult." Mr. Adler took over the ness from 1953 to 1982,

saying lately that I've mellowed. Per haps they are only now getting used younger man, "People have been to me. he was to relinquish his role to a He said once, three years before

racy in general.... But I do not think lemocracy can always work in He also said, "I believe in democ-

with the greatest stars. and beguiling. He could be both in the tautness of his purse strings even our languages. He was famed for Mr. Adler was by turns autocratic

name and ready for a friendly nip hands, always greeting them by He was a favorite of the stage

> golden hammer and the title, "Honwith his grips behind the scenery. orary Grip." They once presented him with a

supernumeraries — gave him a minlature gold and silver spear. The opera's spear carriers — the

seppe Taddei and Rolando Panerai. Sandor Konya, Ingvar Wixell, Giucer, Boris Christoff, Graziella Sciutti, James King, Stuart Burrows, Leonie son, Margaret Price, Inge Borkh, best of postwar era. They included this country formed a galaxy of the tyne Price, Beverly Sills and Jess some of America's greatest — Leon-Mr. Adler launched the careers of Rysanek, Giulietta Simionato, Cesare Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Birgit Nilsmade his American debut here Thomas. Conductor Georg Solti Valletti, Rosanna Carteri, Leyla Gen-The opera stars he introduced to

of Cherubini's "Portuguese his singers not stand flat-footed but (1968) and von Einem's "The Visit of Shostakovich's "Katerina Ismailova Midsummer Night's Dream" (1961) ohne Schatten" (1959), Britten's "A Kluge" (1958), Strauss' "Die Frau the Carmelites" (1957), Orff's "Die brie's "Angle of Repose" (1976), And of introducing operas to the Ameri (1966), Kurt Weill's "Royal Palace" da" (1955), Poulenc's "Dialogues of (1954), Walton's "Troilus and Cressi there were the American premiere from the beginning in insisting that (1964), Janacek's "Makropoulos Case" premieres of Norman Dello Joio can public. There were the work the Old Lady" (1972). He was unique 'Blood Moon" (1961) and Andrew Im Mr. Adler did more than his share

dent of Opera America. the British Empire by Queen Elizatute and a founder and vice presitrustee of the National Opera Insti-National Endowment for the Arts, a the Arts by President Jimmy Carter. beth II of England, and in July was made an honorary Commander of named to the National Council on He was on committees for the

choral conductor, then conductor. At conduct again. manager, he had been with the San Francisco Opera 39 years, starting as ige 76, he was glad to have time to When Mr. Adler stepped down as

what he wants to do with his life, and nas done it. I am such a happy man-"A man is happy who has found He said then:

tra to hear his own music played. er who once hired an entire orches-Austria, in 1905, the son of a textile nanufacturer and amateur compos-Mr. Adler was born in Vienna,

age 17, then at the University of VI-Academy of Music starting in 1922, at He studied at the Vienna State

at the age of 20 because composer he once told an Examiner reporter, his own incidental music for Max fell through the stage floor. Dream," stamped his feet so hard he Reinhardt's "Midsummer Night's Bernhard Paumgartner, conducting He made his debut as a conductor,

Germany and Italy. ater in Vienna in 1925, and the young nouses and symphony halls through Adler went on to conduct at opera That was at the Josefstaedter The

He was conductor for the Vienna

move around the stage convincingly

Springfield, III., in 1940. viola player." They were married in earnest but not particularly gifted She described herself then as "an III CIIIIa. III dulle love, le me

traveling wrote fiction for teen-ag-She traveled abroad with him in years before they were divorced in ers. She published her first novel two his yearly talent searches, and while

a debutante at the San Francisco codesigners at the opera, Nancy Miller. tillion of 1960, and in 1980, approaching his last opera season, they had heir first child. In 1965 he married one of his set

Opera by 1984, and a daughter, Kris was stage director with the Munich Opera by 1984, and a daughter, Kris mid-30s by then, were Ronald, who His two older children, in their

child of Ronald's — Jan. 19, 1980. He called this "an astrological cothe same day as a granddaughter, a His new son, Roman, was born on

ughter, Sabrina. In 1982 he and Nancy had a.

er's Opera in the Park concert every continued to conduct the Opera until ing weekend. September during the season's openhome in Ross in Marin County, and 1984. He also conducted The Examin-He moved his young family to a

born, and he told Caroline Drewes of he Examiner, "They are a gift from He was 77 when his daughter was

Funeral services are pending.

staff also contributed to this report Allan Ulrich of The Examiner



Adler: He Called the Tune

Demanding Maestro Set Standard

By Robert Commanday Chronicle Music Critic

By any measure, Kurt Herbert Adler was the dominant classical musician in the Bay Area in at least the second half of this century, the one who made the greatest impact. It was not a matter of personality, although his moved mountains.

Twenty-eight years of those accomplishments as general director of the San Francisco Opera added up to an influence that became lastingly embedded in the performing tradition of the region. On Tuesday, at the age of 82, the Maestro passed away, and it is sad to think of the great ash tree fallen, the stilling of that unbelievable combination of qualities, energies and temperaments fused by one iron will. Still that influence is operative now, as during his regime, and ever after.

It is a matter of artistic standards. Audiences — his audiences — listen and watch and measure, to an important degree, by the standards of performance Adler set as he relentlessly pursued his ideals, always to make it better. The production staff at the Opera House is still led by Adler's veterans, the expert craftsmen, technicians and artists whom he selected, and then supervised with painstaking attention to every detail. A majority of musicians in the current opera orchestra played for Adler and they know what he wanted.

The standard he set that was most important went beyond the discernment of beautiful voices and vocalism, beyond the appreciation of well-conceived productions and integrated performances, beyond the emotional and esthetic rewards that opera can produce. It was a principle his whole career and the operation of the San Francisco Opera were based upon — that music is the first consideration in opera.

It linked him to his predecessor and former chief here, the San Francisco Opera's founding director, Gaetano Merola. It was his primary contribution to world opera. In an era when stage directors, designers and producers increasingly dominated opera presentation, and the visual and theatrical factors became pre-eminent, Maestro Adler never let loose of the opera's existence, first and fundamentally, as a musical form.

That is not to say that drama and stage values were compromised or neglected. No one would think that who had ever seen such Adler-initiated productions as his American premieres of Strauss' "Die Frau ohne Schatten," Shostakovich's "Katerina Ismailova." Jana-

KURT HERBERT ADLER MILESTONES

Kurt Herbert Adler spent nearly 63 years proving that one of his earliest mentors, Max Reinhardt, was right when he told him "in the theater, nothing is impossible." Born April 2, 1905, in Vienna, Adler became one of the longest reigning operatic directors of the 20th century.

Here is a lineup of the significant professional landmarks of his career:

From 1925 to 1928, Adler gets first professional experience as conductor, at Max Reinhardt Theater in Vienna.

Between 1928 and 1938, he is assistant director of Civic Opera in Kaiserlautern, Germany, also conducting in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and is assistant to Arturo Toscanini at 1936 Salzburg Festival

In 1938, Adler moves to the United States, becoming conductor and chorus master at Chicago Grand Opera for five years.

In 1943, Adler joins San Francisco
Opera as chorus master, conductor and
chief deputy to Gaetano Merola. His conducting debut in 1943 is "Cavalleria Rusticana" with singers Dusolina Giannini and
Charles Kullman.

After death of Merola at Stern Grove in 1953, he becomes artistic director of San Francisco Opera, is appointed general director three years later.

In 1954, Adler's inaugural season, company stages Cherubini's The Portuguese Inn, an American first, and Honegger's Joan of Arc at the Stake, West Coast premiere. Chronicle critic Alfred Frankenstein calls season "the most interesting in local operatic history...this new regime promised much, and it fulfilled every one of its commitments."

ADLER PREMIERES

Two world and 18 American operatic premieres during the Adler era include Walton's Troilus and Cressida (1955), Poulenc's Dialogues of the Carmelites (1957), Orff's The Wise Maiden (1958), Strauss' Die Frau ohne Schatten (1959), Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1961), Dello Joio's Blood Moon (1961), Shostakovich's Katerina Ismailova (1964), Janacek's The Makropoulos Case (1966), Berlioz's Les Troyens (1966), Schuller's The Visitation (1967), Von Einem's The Visit of the Old Lady (1972), Imbrie's Angle of Repose (1976).

San Francisco opera premieres during Adler's tenure include Wagner's Flying Dutchman (1954), Verdi's Macbeth (1955), Mozart's Cosi fan Tutte (1956), Strauss' Ariadne auf Naxos (1957), Verdi's Don Carlo (1958), Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice (1959), Bellini's La Sonnambula (1960), Berg's Wozzeck (1960), Verdi's Nabucco (1961), Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress (1962), Strauss' Capriccio (1963). Tchaikovsky's Queen of Spades (1963), Berg's Lulu (1963), Bellini's I Puritani (1966), Verdi's Ernani (1968), Rossini's La Cenerentola (1969), Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin (1971), Meyerbeer's L'Africaine (1972), Donizetti's La Favorita (1973), Britten's Peter Grimes (1973), Verdi's Luisa Miller (1974), Massenet's Thais (1976), Mozart's Idomeneo (1977), Janacek's Katya Kabanova (1977), Britten's



Kurt Herbert Adler with Monserrat Caballe at Opera in the Park

Rossini's Tancredi (1979), Strauss' Arabella (1980).

STAR PERFORMERS

The list of international opera singers Adler invites to make American debuts at San Francisco Opera includes Birgit Nilsson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Marie Collier, Richard Lewis, Sena Jurinac, Pilar Lorengar, Mario del Monaco, Margaret Price, Anja Silja, Robert Lloyd, Ingvar Wixell, Geraint Evans, Leonie Rysanek, Boris Christoff, Gabriella Tucci, and with the exception of a single engagement in Miami: Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavaratti. Among the conductors and stage directors are Sir Georg Solti, Silvio Varviso, August Everding and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle.

American singers who establish or are given significant boosts to their careers under Adler's guidance include Mary Costa, James McCracken, marilyn Horne, Beverly Sills, Jess Thomas, Thomas Stewart, George Shirley and Leontyne Price, who makes her opera debut here as Madame Lidione in Dialogues of the Carmelites in 1957. "I sort of grew up in San Francisco vocally and professionally." Price often says.

In 1972, the company presents Wagner's "Ring" cycle, the first time since 1935 that all four Wagner operas are presented in a single season.

Adler resumes conducting fall opera in 1973 at urging of Beverly Sills for La Traviata. Since then, he conducts on a moreor-less annual basis, including a new production of Lohengrin (1978), La Forza del Destino with Leontyne Price (1979), Tristan und Isolde with Gwyneth Jones singing her first Isolde (1980), the critically acclaimed Die Meistersinger (1981). In his final year as general director, Adler leads Carmen (1981). Last time in the pit is a repeat of Die Meistersinger (1986). Adler also conducts the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in annual operatic concerts at Stern Grove during the summer and Opera in the Park on fall opera's opening weekend.

On Nov. 19, 1978, Adler's 50th

anniversary in opera, 35th year with San Francisco Opera and 25th year heading the company is observed in a \$500 ticket gala at Opera House attended by a singers' alumni of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Dorothy Kirsten, Bidu Sayao, Licia Albanese, Ingvar. Wixell, Leontyne Price, Cesare Siepi, Graziella Sciutti, many others; Terence McEwen, later designated as Adler's successor, is the gala host; Adler receives San Francisco Opera Medal, cast in Tiffany gold.

CONTINUING FAME

Adler takes the company to Manila in 1979, leading **Tosca** with Eva Marton and Placido Domingo.

San Francisco Opera goes on television nationally and internationally in La Gioconda (1979), Samson et Delilah (1980), Aida (1981).

In December 1981, Adler assumes title of general director emeritus, after 29 years as head of the company.

In 1982, Adler makes a film debut portraying himself in Yes, Giorgio, starring Luciano Pavarotti.

Programs established by Adler are San Francisco Opera Auditions, 1954; Merola Opera Program, 1957; Spring Opera Theater, 1961; Western Opera Theater, 1967, Brown Bag Opera, 1974; Affiliate Artists Program (now the Adler Fellowship Program), 1977; American Opera Project (1979); Summer Festival, now disbanded (1981). Fall opera season grows from one of 5 weeks to 13 ½ weeks in Adler's final season (1981).

Adler's recordings include O Holy
Night with Luciano Pavarotti, Leona Mitchell with Kurt Herbert Adler: An Operatic
Partnership, Verismo Arias with Maria
Chiara, Adler at the Opera, all for London
Records, and Romantic Opera Duets with
Renata Scotto and Placido Domingo for
CBS Records.

- By Marilyn Tucker

mann's "Lear," Imbrie's "The Angle of Repose," or any number of powerful performances of operas in the standard repertory. Many critics and patrons in fact thought that at times Adler went too far in production, when his chosen directors would overemphasize the visual in startling interpretations, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's work as the most obvious example.

Rigorous Discipline

What Adler did, even in such cases, was to apply to the theatrical aspect of production a rigorous discipline that was rooted in musical training, practice and performance. He applied a demanding musician's requirements in such criteria as precision, consistency, timing, purpose or logic to the theatrical aspect of opera. A performer himself, he identified with every performance, taking personal responsibility for it as a statement of his own integrity.

No wonder then that he was such a hard, often harsh, taskmaster. He became the artistic conscience of everyone in the company. Not a pin moved in that Opera House without his knowledge and approval, or so it seemed. Responsibility was designated, but always on a line leading right back to the head man.

It was one-man rule, the definitive artistic tyranny. Personnel came and went, the staff turnover in certain positions became a joke — to outsiders, that is. Feelings were hurt, enemies made. Reports of wonderful battles royal leaked out. One offended conductor got as far as the airport before Adler caught up with him and induced him to return to the rehearsals. That may have happened more than once. In short, there was often more operatic drama going on behind scenes than onstage, a wonderful supraoperatic performance called ADLER.

Not even his temperament and will could overcome the complexities of opera production all the time, and there were substandard productions and per-



Leontyne Price talked with Adler backstage



Adler and diva Joan Sutherland in 1981

formances as there are everywhere. No one recognized the flaws quicker than Adler, no one was more upset by them. One morning the late Paul Hager, a director-protege of Adler's, came into his office to find him fuming over this paper's review of a terrible "Aida." "Just be glad you didn't write it." Hager told him.

Eternal Quest

Repeatedly he would acknowledge his own eternal quest for "the best," in himself, in others, and in his productions. "Unless one is determined, I don't think one makes it," he said in a magazine interview nine years ago."

He was masterly in his dealings with the patrons, the board members who backed him on faith. The trick? Simple. He made his mission theirs and when the going got tough became as disarming as he was at other times implacable. Having to apologize to his board for some mistake, he once said, "I'm sorry, but I assure you I will make more mistakes, because if I didn't, I wouldn't be human and on top of that, you couldn't afford my fee."

Yesterday the question arose about

Liz Smith's Gossip Column

SEE PAGE E6

which of his own accomplishments Adler would have singled out as his peak. Probably, if pressed, he would have embraced the programs he founded for the training of young singers, the Merola Opera Program and Western Opera Theater. Which opera or operas? He couldn't have chosen, or more likely would have replied, "The next one." In 1980 he did say, "The outstanding opera is the one you're busy with at the moment."

Caught in a garrulous mood, he would joke about his temper and temperament, calling himself a "bitcher," and joking about his bellowing. But he wasn't joking and he wasn't about to change one hit

All those 28 years he never seriously trained anyone to succeed him, knowing perhaps that anyone with the independence and willpower and determination to make the grade as general director couldn't possibly submit to his, Adler's, domination. When the time came to select a successor, he chose the best he could. Sadly, even then the co-existence

with the general director-elect, Terence McEwen, didn't work and by the time McEwen took over and Adler was in retirement, the two were at odds, a rift that was never healed. Adler was nonetheless saddened by the news that his successor had to resign for reasons of ill health. He knew of it before the news broke in The Chronicle Tuesday.

That morning, over the telephone, he discussed various candidates to run the company that had been his life and had no recommendation, no endorsement, just wise advice about the problem. Finally, he said, "I gave 29 years and a life to that company. If I can help it now in any way, and I don't want (to do) it, if I would have the support of the board I would." His voice was frail, soft and only with great effort could the words be made out, but his thoughts and mind were clear as ever.

Of course his return to the fray was out of the question, but the will was there, the will that made the San Francisco Opera great, and etched itself in the tradition, to keep it that way. That is the monument, the only appropriate one, the one he built.

San Francisco Chronicle

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Maestro Kurt Adler

KURT HERBERT ADLER was The Maestro and probably no one else in the San Francisco musical community will ever bear the title with such commanding authority, presence and respect.

He was a dominant figure in transforming a provincial opera company into one of world renown. He was the captain of the ship, taking the opera company on elegant, demanding voyages of discovery of both music unperformed previously here but also of artists who had been awaiting discovery.

He brought endless numbers of magic moments to the War Memorial Opera House. Fortunately for the community, the staff he commanded, nurtured and finely tuned, will continue to create fitting memorials to the great teacher and leader.

Among his special talents was that of recognition of artists yet struggling. He introduced, to the North American opera stage, Beverly Sills, Cesare Valenti, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Leontyne Price, Nan Merriman, Mary Costa, Marilyn Horn, Joan Sutherland and Mishlav Rostropovich to name only a few artists who achieved international stardom.

MAESTRO ADLER'S death came only hours after his successor, Terence McEwen, announced he would be leaving the general managership of the opera. The Northern California world of grand opera has thus suffered double loss: two superb talents have left the stage almost simultaneously. They leave both achievement and legend behind them.

ne Music World Owe Much to

By Robert Commanday

Chronicle Muste Gillo.

If there was ever a person creatfor the impossible position of opera company general director, it was Kurt Herbert Adler.

on to step in as acting director of the San Francisco Opera after Gaetano Merola, ducting at Stern Grove in 1953, there was From the moment Adler was called the company founder, died while connever a doubt who was in charge. From

then on, the company grew in all respects and within not many years was recognized internationally as one of the major companies of the world.

Adler had an unerring instinct for talent. He was especially good with singers, and the international stars who made their U.S. debuts on the San Francisco Opera's stage were a roster of lumi-Leonie Rysanek, Birgit naries, including Leontyne

ater, was another model, copied by every major company in America and more founded to produce traveling opera with these young talents, Western Opera Therecently by European houses as well. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf

States — Operas such as Poulenc's "The ertory in San Francisco that was second to none in adventurousness in the United Dialogues of the Carmelites" and ton's "Troilus and Cressida.

developing

pioneer in

t young artists, American singers who got their training and served their appren-

ticeships in the Merola Opera Program

which he founded

company

The small touring

and those who worked with him relentlessly, always in pursuit of quality. Always demanding, he drove him And when something went amiss, a formance less than acceptable to his And when something went amiss, self

Meanwhile, he was presenting a rep-

The Music World's Debt To Kurt Herbert Adler

From Page E1

and eyes, he held himself responsible. The key was that he had keen artistic instinct, the highest standards. He identified himself personally with the final product.

"I know myself whether a performance was good or bad," he once said. "When I hear applause, I think, how can I do it better?"

Maestro Adler was not only a conductor, which is the performing capacity in which most people know him, but also a great actor.

His stage was wherever he was called upon to perform: in his office, raging at someone across the desk one minute, cooing sweetly to a diva over a long-distance phone the next.

In the Opera House during rehearsals, he would come down the aisles like a cloudburst to descend on a conductor who was allowing the orchestra to play too loud for the singers.

From his box during performances, he would be barking directions over the telephone to a stage manager to get the wristwatch off the third chorus member from the left, bring up the lights stage left, and the next instant, he would be cozening some wealthy patron with all the charm his Viennese background could produce.

This great and unique style of working with people, infuriating many, but getting the job done, was part of the Adler genius. He knew what would work.

He made enemies, turning down requests, dismissing performers he did not respect with swift dispatch that was often unkind. He made lifelong friends, winning the undying respect of the opera supporters who went the limit to keep the San Francisco Opera up to Maestro Adler's standards.

Finally when the time came to step down, it was hard, and with all the honors and glory heaped upon him publicly, one could read in his eyes, "How could they let me retire?"

It was a great and glorious career, a life that gave more to San Francisco, to opera and to music lovers everywhere more than will ever be imagined. Every performance in that house echoes to his memory.

Kurt Adler, Conductor Who Led San Francisco Opera, Dies at 82

By JOHN ROCKWELL

Kurt Herbert Adler, a Viennese-born conductor who led the San Francisco Opera for 28 years until his retirement in 1981, died of a heart attack Tuesday evening at his home in Ross, Calif., a suburb north of San Francisco. He was 82 years old.

Mr. Adler's death followed by only a few hours the announcement that his successor, Terence A. McEwen, would retire because of acute diabetes.

During his tenure with the company, Mr. Adler shaped it into one of the leading opera ensembles of the world.

The San Francisco Opera was founded in 1923 by Mr. Adler's predecessor, Gaetano Merola, who had a natural predilection for Italian repertory. Mr. Adler brought a different spirit, more oriented toward German repertory, modernism and innovative stage direction. He expanded the repertory, introduced many young singers both European and American, developed summer, apprentice and touring programs and presided over a vast expansion of the season and the budget.

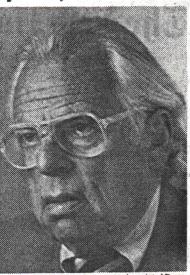
An imperious, crusty figure who involved himself with every aspect of the company's operations, Mr. Adler personified opera in San Francisco during the 1950's, 60's and 70's. A brooding bust of the general director, arms crossed and scowling like Beethoven, was installed in the lobby of the War Memorial Opera House long before his retirement.

Born in 1905 in Vienna and educated at the academy and university, Mr. Adler made his debut as a conductor in 1925 at Max Reinhardt's theater in his native city. He subsequently conducted in opera houses in Germany, Italy and Czechoslovakia, and assisted Arturo Toscanini at the 1936 Salzburg Festi-

Emigrating to the United States in 1938, initially for an engagement at the Chicago Opera, he became a United States citizen in 1941. In 1943 he joined the staff of the San Francisco Opera as chorus master, at first commuting from New York. He was appointed artistic director in 1953 and general director in 1956. Following his retirement on Dec. 31, 1981, he was named general director emeritus.

When Mr. Adler took over the company in 1953, its season lasted five weeks. At his retirement, it stretched from Labor Day through December, with added spring and summer sea-

Operas given their American pre-



Associated Press

Kurt Herbert Adler

mieres during his tenure included Britten's "Midsummer Night's Dream," Richard Strauss's "Frau Ohne Schatten" and Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites."

In addition to an unusually wide range of standard and not-so-standard repertory, other novelties included Cherubini's "Portuguese Inn," Honegger's "Joan of Arc at the Stake," Walton's "Troilus and Cressida," Orff's "Wise Maiden," Norman Dello Joio's "Blood Moon," Shostakovich's "Katerina Ismailova," Robert Ward's "Crucible," Douglas Moore's "Carry Nation," Gunther Schuller's "Visitation," Aribert Reimann's "Lear" and a triple bill of the Weill-Schuller "Royal Palace," Schoenberg's "Erwartung" and the "Discovery of America" portion of Milhaud's "Christopher Columbus."

More than 300 singers, conductors, directors and designers made their American debuts with the San Francisco Opera under Mr. Adler's auspices. They included Boris Christoff, Geraint Evans, August Everding, Tito Gobbi, Sena Jurinac, Pilar Lorengar, Mario Del Monaco, Birgit Nilsson, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Leontyne Price, Margaret Price, Mstislav Rostropovich, Leonie Rysanek, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Giulietta Simionato, Georg Solti and Renata Tebaldi.

Mr. Adler is survived by his wife, Nancy; two daughters, Kristin Krueger of Clayton, Calif., and Sabrina, of Ross; two sons, Ronald, of Munich, West Germany, and Roman, of Ross, and two grandchildren.